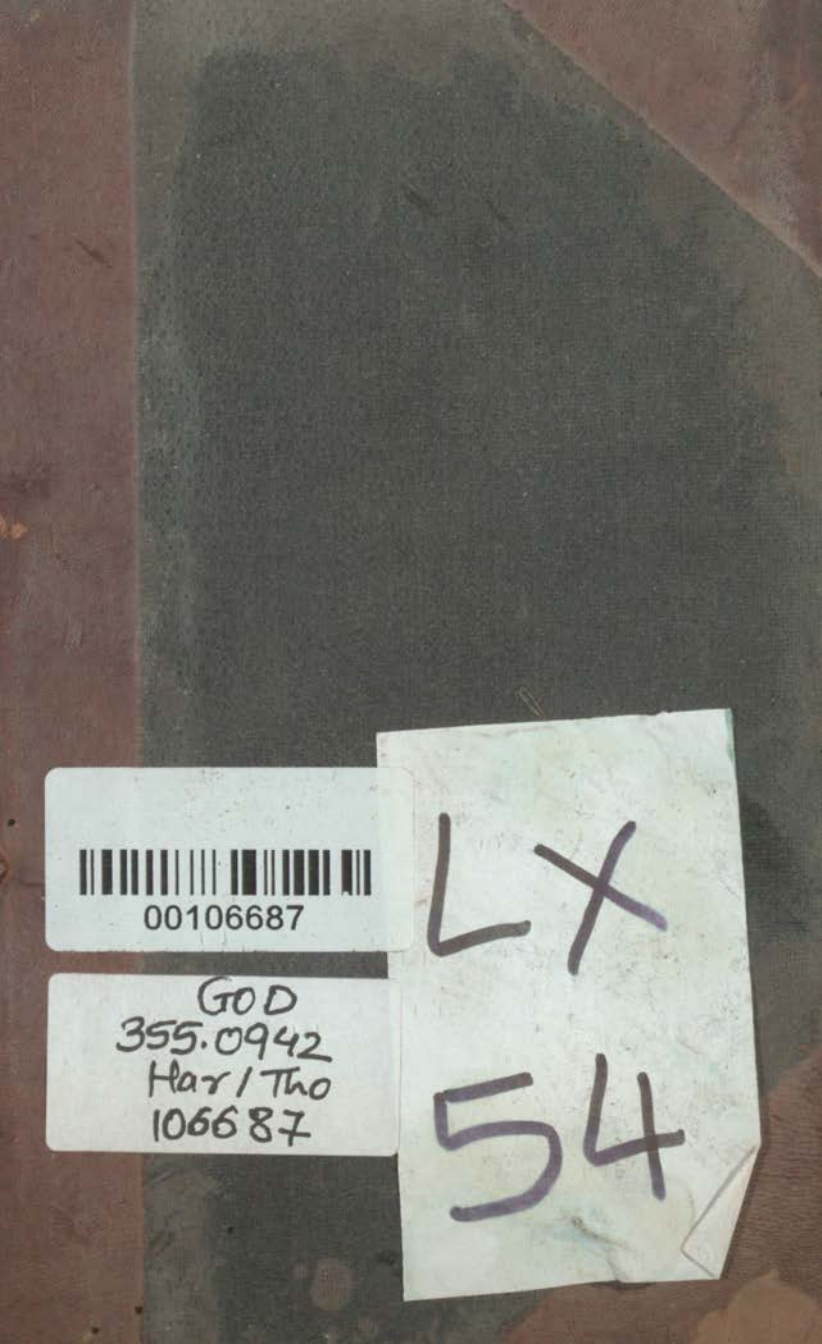
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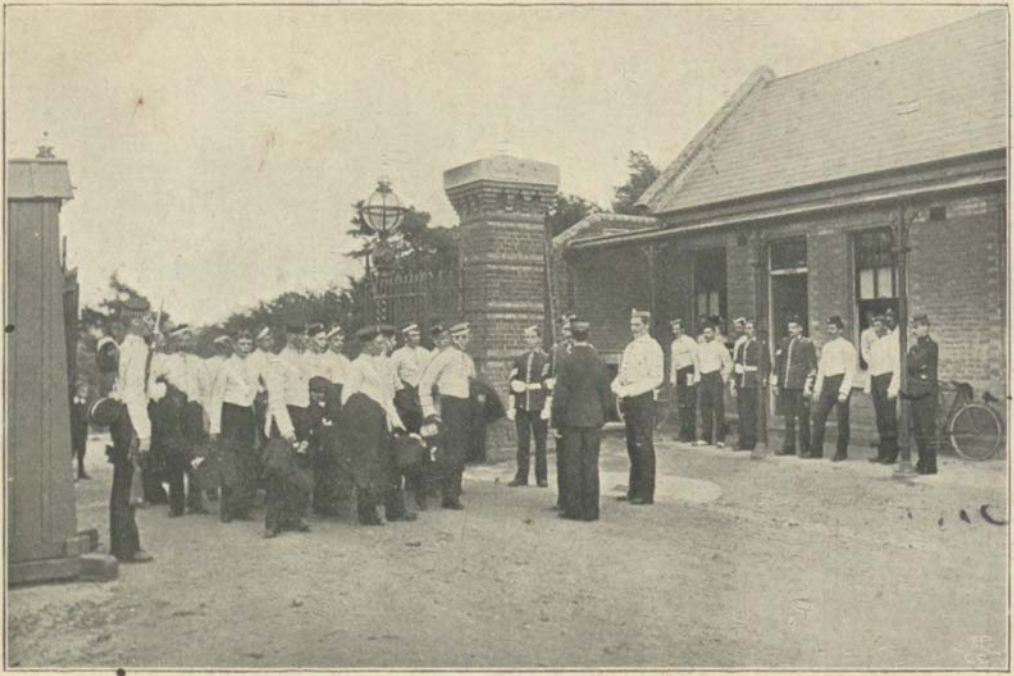

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MR THOMAS ATKINS

By

E. J. HARDY, M.A.
CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

Author of "How to be Happy though Married," "The Business of Life," etc., etc.

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"Those who live on amid our homes to dwell
Have grasped the higher lessons that endure.
The gallant private learns to practise well
His heroism obscure.
His heart beats high as one for whom is made
A mighty music solemnly what time
The oratorio of the cannonade
Rolls through the hills sublime."—*Archbishop Alexander.*

"We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barracks, most remarkably like you."—*Kipling.*

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1900

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TO THE

OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND PRIVATES

FROM WHOM I LEARNED WHAT I KNOW OF THE BRITISH

ARMY, AND FROM WHOM I HAVE RECEIVED HELP

AND KINDNESS WHICH CAN NEVER

BE FORGOTTEN

I dedicate this study

IN RED, BLUE, GREEN, AND KHAKI

PREFACE

HAVING been connected with the British soldier as a clergyman is to his parishioner for twenty-two years, I might call him "Tommy Atkins" with much more grace than many who use the term; but I shall not do so, at least on the cover of my book, for fear of not being sufficiently respectful.

It is said that he is a good fellow whom his friends call by his Christian name. If so, Tommy Atkins must be the good fellow that many of us know he is. Let us hope that "Tommy" is a pet name in the mouth of the public. And I think it is. If all English people, men as well as women, love Jack the Blue-jacket, most of them, at least now, if they did not formerly, keep a warm corner in their hearts for

"the lad in red." That this is so, is proved by the frequency with which Mr Thomas Atkins is brought upon the stage and into novels. The military man gets almost as much attention from the writers of these as does the clergyman, and as little as the clergyman is he shown as he really is.

I have tried to make our soldiers true to life for my readers. In order to do this I had to give personal experiences, which, if the reason for their introduction is not remembered, will probably appear egotistical.

If it be asked how I know what is related in this book, I reply that I have always liked soldiers, and have gone in and out amongst them at all hours, in barracks and in camp, at home and abroad, for nearly twenty-three years.

When Mr Atkins engages in a fashionable war, the British public are inclined to make a fool of him, talking as if it were rather wonderful, and not a matter of course that he should endure hardships uncomplainingly, and should not skulk in battle.

Soldiers hate this sort of thing almost as much as the cold shoulder they too often get in time of peace.

Mr Atkins could do with fewer cardigan jackets, handkerchiefs, bottles of scent, tracts threatening him with hell, suggestions about dropping comforts on him from balloons, and other favours which he receives during war, if he were treated more civilly in places of public resort in time of peace.

Mr Atkins is now in fashion, and before he goes out of fashion I wish to record the result of a sympathetic yet critical study of him. With all his faults I love him still, and hope that my book may at least delay a cold fit from following the hot one in which the public are indulging.

I have taken many illustrative incidents from the war in South Africa, and have brought the study in all points up to date.

One of these chapters appeared in *Cassell's Magazine* and two in *The United Service Magazine.*

The author's profits in this book will be given to soldiers disabled on active service,

to the families who lost their bread-winners in helping us to win, or to something that is for the benefit of Mr Thomas Atkins, my very good friend.

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MR THOMAS ATKINS

CHAPTER I

MR THOMAS ATKINS

THE origin of the name "Tommy Atkins" may be found in the soldier's small book. There, until lately, was given an imaginary clothing account as a model between the Government and Thomas Atkins.

Another derivation of the phrase is, perhaps, truer, and is certainly more flattering. In 1857, when rebellion broke out at Lucknow, all the Europeans fled to the Residency. On their way they met a private of the 32nd Regiment (Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry) on sentry at an outpost. They told him to make his escape with them, but he would not do so, and was killed. His name happened

to be Thomas Atkins, and so, throughout the mutiny campaign, when a daring deed was done, the doer was said to be "a regular Tommy Atkins." There is no room, then, for the condescension or pity which sometimes seems to be suggested by the phrase when used by civilians.

People often write and speak of soldiers as if they were different from other men, but putting a man into a red coat does not alter his nature, and under the present system of short service Tommy Atkins has not time to change much from what he was when he enlisted. Still the environment of his life does develop certain humours and eccentricities which are interesting to study.

The first tendency we notice of the military profession is that it makes a soldier more or less a machine.

> "His not to reason why,
> His but to do and die."

To be "lord of himself" is often, as Lord Byron found to his cost, a "heritage of woe" to a man, and it is not a bad thing for him to be wound up like a clock and made to go right; but this winding up process converts him into, it may be a

noble machine, but a machine still. Nearly everything which a soldier does he is ordered to do. He is put down for a new pair of boots or tunic without being asked whether he wants them or not. His dinner comes to him as though it were manna from Heaven. He is told when to get his hair cut, and when to put on or take off the several parts of his outfit. At length he ceases almost entirely to think for himself, and puts child-like trust in the "Queen's Regulations."

Soldiers are, as a rule, very well-mannered men. This may be because they come more into contact with their social superiors than do country bumpkins. They are frequently spoken to by their officers; a few are servants in the family of officers or in the mess; or they learn politeness from those of their companions who have had better opportunities than themselves. You may always suspect that a man in civilian life has been a soldier when he begins to address you with "Beg pardon, sir."

Faraday understood and made use of the habit of unquestioning obedience which a man acquires in the army. When he

was preparing to lecture in natural science at the Royal Institution, he advertised for a retired sergeant to help him with his experiments. Being asked why he sought for a military man, he explained that some of the materials that would be used were dangerous, and that, therefore, he wanted for an assistant, not one who would follow his own ignorant judgment, and blow up himself, the professor, and the audience, but one who would do exactly what he would be told, and nothing else.

It cannot be said with truth that British soldiers never grumble or "grouce," as they call it, for they do make use of this privilege, as do the rest of their countrymen; but when they have by "groucing" "eased their chests," they will go anywhere and do anything. "I often say," writes "General" Booth, "if we could only get Christians to have one-half of the practical devotion and sense of duty that animate even the commonest Tommy Atkins, what a change would be brought about in the world!"

In their way soldiers are very philosophical. If anything in their work annoys them they say, "It's all in the seven," *i.e.*

the seven years for which they join the army. This means the same thing as civilians mean when they say, "It's all in the day's work."

A pleasant trait in soldiers is their affection for children. You see them continually playing with the "kids," as they always call them, of the married men. Indeed, the wife of many an impecunious officer gets more than half her nursing done for her by her husband's soldier servant. About nine years ago I was stationed at Malta, with a battalion of the Welsh Regiment. They had as a sort of regimental pet a little Soudanese boy, whom some of their members who were on active service in the Soudan had picked up after the battle of Toski. The boy was almost starved, and was lying between his father and mother, both of whom had been shot by English bullets. The mounted infantry drummer who picked up the child, aged at the time about four years, rode a great distance to get milk for him, which the medical officers said was the only thing that would make him well. "Jimmy Welsh" became such a fine boy that my Roman Catholic colleague

and myself each tried to get him for our respective Communions.

And children seem to trust and take to soldiers. A corporal told me lately with pride that a little girl about six years of age came up to him and caught hold of his coat. She seemed to be much frightened, and the soldier asked her what she feared. "A dog," she replied, "that lives near here, and I have been waiting for a soldier to come along."

Here is part of a letter which shows how tender is the heart of the British warrior. It was written from South Africa by a man of the Royal Medical Staff Corps :—

"We were out looking after the wounded at night when the fight was over, when I came across an old white-bearded Boer. He was lying behind a bit of rock supporting himself on his elbows. I was a bit wary of the old fellow at first. Some of these wounded Boers we've found are snakes in the grass. You go up to them with the best intentions, and the next thing you know is that the man you were going to succour is blazing at you with his gun. So I kept my eye on the old chap. But when I got nearer I saw that he was too far gone to raise his rifle. He was gasping hard for breath, and I saw he was not long for this world. He motioned to me that he wanted to speak, and I bent over him. He asked me to go and find his son—a boy of thirteen,

who had been fighting by his side when he fell. Well I did as he asked me, and under a heap of wounded I found the poor lad, stone dead, and I carried him back to his father. Well, you know I'm not a chicken-hearted sort of a fellow. I've seen a bit of fighting in my time, and that sort of thing knocks all the soft out of a chap. But I had to turn away when that old Boer saw his dead lad. He hugged the body to him and moaned over it, and carried on in a way that fetched a big lump in my throat—until that very moment I never thought how horrible war is. I never wanted to see another shot fired. And when I looked round again the old Boer was dead, clasping the cold hand of his dead boy."

The observant powers of soldiers show themselves in the apt nicknames they give. Of these every officer has one or more. Some of the men can read their officers like a book. A strict officer is by no means disliked so long as he is fair, while one who is slack and easy-going, in order to become popular, misses his aim, and only gains contempt. It seems to Tommy that he is, as it were, defrauded when he deserves a scolding or a punishment and does not get one. He speaks of punishment as being due to him, as, for example, "I am indebted ten days C.B." (confinement to barracks) "for so-and-so." "If I get my rights I'll have a court-martial over this."

One cannot have much dealings with

soldiers without discovering that they are very suspicious. When any social amusement, or indeed anything to benefit them, is got up, they immediately suspect that some one is going to make something out of them. If it be organised by a chaplain Tommy thinks that it is some device for getting hold of him in order to preach to him. Allow him to go into an entertainment without paying and he will not care to do so, suspecting that what is offered for nothing is not worth more. Even if it be worth going to he is proud, and prefers to pay his way.

Talk of the vanity of women, in my opinion that of men is quite as great. Certainly a large number of soldiers enlist simply for the sake of "the clothes." Not long since a soldier complained to me about the "cruelty" of his commanding officer, who was trying to prevent the men in his regiment from wearing a little curl of hair on each side of the forehead. "I would rather," he said, most solemnly, "lose an arm than have my front hair cut too short."

As an illustration of the kindness of soldiers to each other, I give the following instance:—A man was in the habit of

drinking, neglecting his work, and keeping himself very dirty; yet he was a good-natured fellow, and the occupants of his barrack-room were sorry when they saw him getting into trouble every day with his officers. They determined to take him in hand, and try if they could not keep him straight. Accordingly, on the next pay-day they induced him, instead of spending his money in the canteen, to hand it over, all but one shilling, which he was to have for pocket-money, to one of their number, to be deposited for him in a savings bank. This soon mounted up to a respectable little sum. The man's nerves, which used to cause him to tremble when on parade, grew stronger, and in all ways the improvement of his character was so marked that he was made a lance-corporal. Alas, for the virtue that depends on man only! One of the many changes of military life removed from the poor fellow his kind friends. In the absence of their advice and interest in him he fell back into his old carelessness, and proceeded to dissipate himself and his money worse than before. Here was kindness shown, not in ministering to low desires, but in trying to eradicate them, which is

surely the most friendly thing that one man can do for another.

Another instance of this sort of kindness came under my notice lately. A man was confined in a military prison, and his chum went to see him. "Ah, Jim," said the prisoner to his visitor, "if you had not been moved out of my room I would never have come here." As long as he had a friend to look after him he behaved well. When the friend was removed he broke away, so to speak, from his moorings.

Not long ago we saw it stated in a newspaper that some young gentlemen who were trying to get commissions through the ranks of the army were in the habit of wearing plain clothes, with the permission of their commanding officers, when off duty and away from barracks.

We doubt whether even commissioned officers should be allowed to do this, and we are quite sure that, except in very special cases, non-commissioned officers and privates should not. If a man is ashamed of Her Majesty's uniform, the sooner he ceases to wear it altogether the better.

Why should it be considered a privilege to get out of military uniform; and is it

true that even the most respectable non-commissioned officers are sometimes made to feel uncomfortable in restaurants, theatres, and other public places?

There may be a morbid sensitiveness in this matter, and it is not unlikely that soldiers fancy their uniform is despised on many occasions when nothing of the kind is the case. At the same time, there does seem to be some reason for thinking that the social position of a British soldier is not what it ought to be. Certainly it is not what it is on the Continent, where officers and men travel on the railways and attend places of public entertainment at reduced prices, and have every consideration shown to them.

In time of war every one is ready to admire those who sacrifice ease and comfort and life itself for the supposed good of their country; but with the return of peace Tommy Atkins is subjected to the old social inconveniences because he is "only a soldier."

"While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, fall be'ind,'
But it's 'Please to walk in front, Sir, when there's trouble in the wind.'"

At Netley Hospital the surgeons on probation used to ask me how in my opinion a medical officer should rank. I replied that he should have the rank of field marshal beside the bedside of his patient, and everywhere else as he behaved himself. In the same way, we should respect a soldier on the field of battle for his courage, and everywhere else as he behaves himself.

"He that is truly dedicated to war hath no self love," and if we do not honour a profession whose ideal is self-sacrifice what will we honour? Surely sacrifice for the sake of duty is what is meant by the cross of Christ.

Whence, then, this prejudice against a profession the ideal of which is so noble? It may, we think, in part be accounted for as follows: Napoleon called England a nation of shopkeepers, and though she was able to put down this European bully and hold her own against all comers by her arms, it was not by these, but by the arts of peace, that Britain became "Great."

She is a commercial and not a military nation, and as such cannot be expected to "dote on the military." We consider a standing army an evil, though a necessary

one, and the fiction is kept up that it is only a temporary measure, for a new lease of life has to be given to it every year in Parliament by the passing of what is known as the Army Act.

Free Britons have a horror of even the thought of a military dictator riding at the head of an army over their individual rights and liberties. But besides this jealousy of the army there is another circumstance which has given it a traditional bad name, and that is the way recruits used to be obtained.

During the war with France, at the commencement of the century, when it was difficult to get enough soldiers, men who deserved to go to prison were frequently allowed to enter the army instead.

The character of our soldiers then was not unlike that of those whom Falstaff commanded, and thus described: "Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves" (fetters) "on; for, indeed, I had the most of them out of prison."

It is not so long ago that parents spoke of a young hopeful "going for a soldier" in much the same tone of despair as would

have been used if they had announced his incarceration.

Those who know soldiers are well aware that their conduct is, generally speaking, quite as good, or, perhaps, owing to discipline, rather better than that of civilians of the same class; but those who are bad are far more conspicuous on account of their uniform, and these acquire for all a bad reputation.

The social status of a soldier will not be what it ought to be until at least half as much care is taken to exclude from the army the morally bad as there now is to keep out the physically weak; until unworthy characters are dismissed more freely, and until some means is devised by which they can be prevented from rejoining, as they now do.

We gladly admit that the prejudice against soldiers in Britain, the origin of which we have tried to trace, has greatly lessened, especially in the last few years. Short service and the volunteer movement have made soldiering more popular. Citizen soldiers have connected the army with civilian life, and even the regulars are not now separated from it as they once were.

They leave it for only a few years and then go back to it again, and this in such numbers that almost every family in the country is interested in the respectability and general well-being of the service.

CHAPTER II

RECRUITS

How soldiers of the right quantity and quality are to be obtained is always a difficulty, at least in time of peace, to the rulers of the British army. If we want to tap a higher grade of society and get recruits of the artisan class, we must give pay that would be considered ruinous—that is to say, about half-a-crown a day. Boys and hobbledehoys may be had for less, but hardly, when trade is good, those who have passed the threshold of manhood and settled down in some steady civilian employment. And indeed, considering the cost of crime and sickness in the army, it might perhaps be as cheap, in the end, to give even as much as two shillings and sixpence a day, if by doing so we could close all the military prisons and half the hospitals. I say all the prisons; for if men were paid like this, almost the only, and certainly the most

dreaded punishment would be, as it is in the case of the Royal Irish Constabulary, dismissal from the service. Half the hospital accommodation, too, would suffice; for half the diseases and accidents that are treated in these places are the direct or indirect result of vices from which men better brought up would be more exempt.

Another and a cheaper way of getting recruits from a better class would be to allow a soldier, after he is dismissed recruits' drill, or even after he has been in the army for a month, to live anywhere he likes and can afford, so long as he turns up for his duties—he might pay a substitute for coal-carrying fatigue—well fed and properly dressed. The one-year volunteer student-soldier in the German army has this privilege, and it seems to work well there. What respectable parents who have tried to bring their sons up well, dread, and the sons themselves, is the barrack-room. Perhaps the bad reputation which this place of residence has acquired is not altogether deserved; but if a young man knew that he could live in lodgings by himself, or with one or more like-minded chums, and had not to face barrack-room customs, language, and glare of

publicity, he would not be afraid, whatever were his antecedents, to indulge his tastes for soldiering. A regulation like this would, it seems to me, be far better than a regiment of gentlemen privates, with its invidious distinction, and would give us thousands of recruits whom snobs of tradesmen would be afraid to warn off their premises lest they should miss the opportunity of entertaining a moneyed angel unawares.

For some years back England has been doing all she can think of to improve the condition of her soldiers; but she gets little or no credit for it. The fact is that the advantages of the army, in spite of the official statement, which may be read at any post-office, and the coloured posters on barrack-gates, are not known or are not realised. If only batches of young civilian men were personally conducted through some of our new barracks, or even through the old ones when occupied by regiments with enlightened commanding officers, what an advertisement it would be for the army! Those who think of enlisting are ready enough to find out the drawbacks of military life, but not so quick at discovering what a really good time soldiers have. When the

writer was stationed at Plymouth none of the country lads would enlist at the Royal Artillery Depôt, which was a little more than two miles from the town, because they used to see the gunners pulling about the guns, and they thought that the work might be fatiguing. Recruits for the artillery are more easily got where the work to be done is not known.

No one takes such a cynical view of recruits and of their motives for enlisting as soldiers themselves. A few of them the other day were enjoying that which is almost the greatest pleasure a soldier has—looking at an awkward squad of recruits. I began talking to them, and said something about the reasons that influence men to enlist. "Believe me, sir," said one of those addressed, "few men enlist except from hunger"—that is, want of employment—"or drunkenness." This was an extreme opinion in one direction on a subject that is frequently discussed in the newspapers—the quantity and quality of recruits. "Now then, gentlemen privates, take up your coal," I lately heard a soldier say to his companions in a coal-carrying fatigue-party. This was a little bit of gentle satire in reference to the men of superior

character, education, and social position who are supposed to be now enlisting by those who take a somewhat too rose-coloured view of our recruits.

The truth lies between these extremes. It is not true that all men who enlist do so as a last resource, nor is it true that there is a startling change for the better in the quality of our recruits. The matter is regulated by the labour market. When trade is bad we get good recruits, and when good, bad ones. The army is still recruited mainly from the class of manual labourer. Of shop-assistants and clerks the year before last there were only seventy-three per thousand. Eleven per thousand were of professional standing—students mainly.

But, indeed, all sorts and conditions of men enlist, and this is why I have always liked talking to recruits. Hodge tells you about the last crop of "mangle-wuzzel," Jim Clerk talks of his office in the City, John Barleycorn of his days behind the bar, Mr Barnet Smith of his university days, and Mr Snag of his apprenticeship to a solicitor. Very curious experiences, too, are given by those who have travelled with a circus or show of some kind.

As to the reasons why men enlist, they are very mixed, and as many as the men. After a smart cavalry regiment or a battery of horse artillery passes through a town, young fellows think that they would like to look "so handsome, brave, and grand," and enlist. Others join the army in order to see the "foreign parts" about which they have heard chums speaking, who had returned to their native villages upon furlough. Then, of course, there is often a "she" in this, as in most other matters. There has been a lovers' quarrel, and the young fellow enlists to spite the young woman; or his father has put a stepmother over him, and he thinks that a barrack-room will be less disagreeable than his home. Some become soldiers because they cannot get work; others because they do not like work, and think that a soldier has nothing to do but dress well and knock about with a cane. Others believe that the red coat, like charity, will hide a multitude of sins: they have not given satisfaction to their employers, or they have broken the laws of their country, and enter its service in order to hide themselves. Men enlist for the queerest reasons. Once a patient in a military hospital told me that

he did so in order to have a military funeral, an honour that the poor fellow soon obtained. He was in consumption when he joined, but by some trick or another managed to sham the doctor. Another man gave to me as his reason for enlisting that he wanted to learn to read. He had escaped so successfully the School Board inspectors, and had been such a truant when a boy, that he grew up quite illiterate. Being ashamed of his ignorance, he thought he would learn something quietly in a military school.

Here, it may be observed, that in the number of recruits eighteen in a thousand cannot read, and eleven in a thousand cannot write. Only forty-nine in a thousand, however, are described as well-educated.

I would not for a moment suggest that men never enlist because they are soldiers at heart and like the profession. Many do, and this is proved by the number who try to get into a regiment that is likely to go on active service. Indeed, there are a great many young Englishmen who like nothing so well as the chance of getting themselves killed.

In one respect the army rather resembles matrimony. Those who are in it want to

get out, and those who are out want to get in. That this is the case is shown by the fact that the number of deserters each year is nearly the same as the number of those who fraudulently enlist.

That the martial spirit is not in all who rush hastily into red coats is proved by the fact that as much as fifty thousand pounds a year is paid to Government by soldiers purchasing their discharge.

"I wonder," said a bonnie lassie, "what oor Jock sees in the lassies to mak' him like them sae weel? For my part, I wadna gie one laddie for a' the lassies that ever I saw."

In the same way, the soldier who has found either that the army does not suit him, or that he does not suit it, wonders what the recruit sees in the service to make him like it. For his part, he would gladly exchange the most brilliant uniform for the toil-stained fustian of a working man.

Enlisting is very infectious. Recruits come in two or three at a time. If one youth in a village is seized with military ambition, some of those who work or idle with him, or who have been at school with him, will also wish to become Alexanders or Napoleons.

I once had an interview with a man in a

military prison who was there for fraudulent enlistment. He had deserted and become a soldier again; and yet, the moment I saw him I noticed that his right or shooting eye was blind. Asking him about it, he said that the eye had always been blind. How did the man get through the medical examination each time he enlisted? This, however, was several years ago, and the doctor is more difficult to pass now. During the last six years twenty per cent. have failed to do so.

The tests for hearing are searching, and only a certain number of bad teeth are allowed.

Extreme ugliness disqualifies for service in Germany. This is not so with us if I may judge from some recruits I see. Indeed, ugliness may be put to use in the ranks. When Beau Brummell was a cavalry officer he used to be guided to his place in the regiment by the enormous nose of a man in his troop. Once the colonel asked him what he was doing, and he replied: "I am looking for my nose, sir."

Would-be soldiers, of course, try to make light of their defects; and one, an Irishman, when asked if he had ever had an accident,

replied: "Yes, I once took a cold." Chest-measurement is the most frequent cause of rejection; but if a youth wants an inch or an inch and a half of girth, he can sometimes "pull it up" by going through a militia training. So it is that the militia is a door to the army for private soldiers who are physically deficient, as it is for officers who, if not intellectually deficient, are not replete with book-lore.

A candidate for the army is forcibly reminded of Herbert Spencer's teaching—that the foundation of all success in life is to be a good animal. He is told to strip to the skin, and probably "take that off too if you can," is added. Then he is weighed, measured, and put through as many motions as a valuable horse when being bought. His first step to glory is not the goose-step on the parade-ground, as is generally supposed, but the one he takes when, in obedience to the doctor, he hops on one leg across the medical-inspection room. It is a pity that his teeth do not indicate his age, as in the case of a horse, for this would save him telling as many lies as some women do on this subject. But though the teeth do not show whether a growing

lad is eighteen or less, or a young man over or under twenty-five, the medical officer, especially if he have carefully studied the new science of anthropometry, can generally detect a falsehood.

Horne Tooke said that he had been christened and vaccinated, but neither of them took. It is to be feared that the characters from clergymen and employers which men produce when enlisting give slight indication as to whether or not their christening took. As regards vaccination, no one is taken for a soldier who does not consent to be re-vaccinated.

A recruit must be unmarried. Shrewish wives have driven many men into the ranks, but not with the consent of the authorities. The married man who represents himself a bachelor is liable to two years' imprisonment.

The number of men who enlist varies much with the season. Fewest come in the summer, when work is plenty and it is not too cold to sleep out at night. Men who are hard up may join at Christmas in order to share the good cheer and festivities which they hear of as provided in barracks; but those who have a table to put

their legs under on Christmas Day postpone their fresh start in life until the New Year.

One of the last reports of the Inspector-General of Recruiting refers favourably to the results of "the new system of gymnastic training, which was specially drawn up with a view to the gradual development of the young soldier." Would that some system could be provided which would save the young soldier from the demoralising influences of garrison towns and of older soldiers who undertake to show him life! Might not two or three depôts be established, in the country if possible, to one of which every man who enlists should be sent to do his recruit's drill? If recruits were in this way all kept together, moral supervision could be exercised, and special rules made which would be unpractical in reference to older soldiers. The officers and drill-sergeants at these depôts would acquire a special aptitude for managing recruits, and would prevent fraudulent enlistment by being able to recognise old hands.

One drawback there would be in having recruits by themselves at a depôt—there would be no older soldiers from whom they

could learn to clean their accoutrements, and do other parts of a soldier's work. Still, this would be more than compensated for by an absence of instruction in vice and of petty persecutions, which recruits not seldom get when they join a few at a time.

It may be admitted, however, that the practical jokes of the barrack-room never did much to make military life unpopular, and that they are not now carried nearly so far as once they were. If Tommy Raw is sent by his room-mates to the carpenter's shop to get measured for a sentry-box, or to the armourer sergeant to get the handkerchiefs he has not drawn in his kit, or persuaded to take his mess-tin on parade on muster days to get his allowance of mustard, this sort of thing happens at public schools, and does not do much harm. Nor does it break rookey's (the recruit's) bones, nor inflict any permanent injury, if his bed is "made" for him so that when he steps in he finds his feet stopped half-way, or "set" so that it comes down during the night.

Sometimes a recruit is well able to hold his own not only against comrades

but against those of higher rank. "Why did you come off that horse?" a sergeant in a riding school asked a recruit. "Did you see anything up in the air for me to hold on to, sergeant?" replied "cruitie."

A major told a militia sentry that he had not saluted him properly. "Hold on, sir," said the recruit, "and I'll give you another." Then spitting on his hands he presented arms.

A policeman was standing in the street, when a militiaman came up and saluted him. "Here," called out the policeman, "why did you salute me?" "Well," returned the redcoat, "I've only just 'listed, and I must have something to practise on."

There may be laughter when a recruit salutes the wrong person, or when, if a cavalry man, he comes to stables with braces on, or fails to distinguish between the near and the off side of a horse, but the ridicule will soon cease if the young soldier can keep his temper.

We are glad to see from a late return that the popular impression that there is a great difficulty in getting recruits, and that, owing to a decline in the national

physique, the standard had to be lowered, is without foundation. The cavalry standard was, it is true, reduced an inch; but this had nothing to do with an "effete civilisation." The fact was that the recruits were found to develop and increase in weight too rapidly for the comfort of the horses that had to carry them.

The first two or three days of the life of a recruit is somewhat as follows:— Having passed the medical examination, he is, after being given twenty-four hours to consider, taken to the orderly room, and there sworn in by the officer commanding the depôt upon a Bible that is generally very greasy. The oath is this: "I, Thomas Atkins, do make Oath that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, Her Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me, God!"

After these "swear words," which, let us hope, are the only ones he will use during his service, the new Thomas Atkins gets his regimental number, and is taken by his Colour-Sergeant to the quarter-master's stores and provided with an outfit.

Before long the recruit picks up a chum, and upon the choice he makes his career as a soldier and a man will greatly depend. If the chum be an idle fellow, who does not like working up himself, he ridicules the aspirations of young soldiers to become non-commissioned officers, and to improve their education by attending school.

The recruit will have many so-called friends if he bring with him money from home or shows himself willing to lend his things. If he drink, he can all too easily find pot companions, and even if he choose what is for a young soldier the better part of a total abstainer, several men will attach themselves to him for what they can get. A teetotaler is supposed by the men of his company always to have money to lend, and when he denies that this is the case he is met by the reply:

"I wonder what you teetotalers find to do with your money," as if drink were the only thing upon which money should be spent.

A good "pal," however, is a wonderful help. "When," said a cavalry recruit to me, "I enlisted, I could not get on with my sword-drill; but my right-hand man in the barrack-room, who had made me his friend at once, used to give me private lessons in the drill, and saved me many a wigging from the sergeant."

In the army, as elsewhere, it is the first step that costs. To begin well is half the battle. In some respects the most difficult position to fill is that of a lance-corporal. He has not become accustomed to responsibility, and does not like giving orders to those of his own age and standing. Then he might say in reference to his work what Tennyson makes the brook say—

> "Men may come, and men may go,
> But I run on for ever."

He has, however, got his step on the first round of the ladder of promotion, and, if he be steady and possessed of tact and

ability to manage men, there is nothing to prevent him from gaining as good or better situation than any he could reasonably expect in civilian life.

The following is a true story of General M'Bean, who rose from the ranks. When a recruit in the 93rd Highlanders he had a rolling way of walking. The drill-corporal used to laugh at him and another recruit for this. The other recruit asked M'Bean to join him in giving the corporal a drubbing. "No," answered M'Bean. "One day I am going to command the regiment, and this would be a bad beginning."

CHAPTER III

INSIDE A BARRACK-ROOM

LET us see the place where our recruit will live, let us enter a barrack-room. Barrack-rooms are of all shapes and sizes, but there is a regulation number of cubic feet of space allowed to each man. They contain two rows of iron cots, which are so made that in the day-time they can be put into a small compass by being doubled up in two. On each cot is placed its mattress folded in three,[1] with the blankets and sheets neatly folded and placed on the top, and the whole kept together by a strap, to which is fastened a tin ticket bearing the occupant's name and number. In this way a sleeping-room is turned into a day-room, where the men clean their things, mend their clothes, knit socks, do fancy work, write letters, play cards, argue with their chums, practise some musical instrument, or do anything else to pass the time.

[1] These are called "dog biscuits," because they are like them in colour and shape.

Running round the walls of the room are two shelves, iron pegs, holds for rifles, each man's share of these conveniences being whatever is above or behind his cot. Here he keeps valise, black bag, kit bag, and the rest of his pathetically small property. In the middle of the room there are wooden tables and forms on iron supports. These, with the mops, brushes, cans, plates, and bowls, which are generally kept in a recess or cupboard, complete the furniture of the room. In winter one or two good fires add their cheerful warmth and light to the scene.

Socrates said that a young man should be continually looking into a mirror, because if he were handsome he should make his conduct correspond, and if he were ugly he should atone for this by beautiful behaviour. Alas, for a whole barrack-room! there is often only a broken bit of looking-glass a couple of inches square.

But if there is not much else, there is a great deal of human nature in a barrack-room, and nowhere can it be better studied. All sorts and conditions of men are there represented, and in such close contact with each other, that every little peculiarity is observed. An exception to this is the fact

that there are two or three cases on record where women enlisted as soldiers, and lived in barrack-rooms, without having their secret discovered.

As a rule, however, the men who live in the room with a soldier know as much or more about him than he does about himself. A man is settling the small amount of property that his black bag and kit bag contain. He shows you a book or some other keepsake from a mother or teacher, and the fact that this is treasured up gives an insight into his character. Another has domestic tastes, which he gratifies by putting upon the wall, near his cot, photographs of his relations. These good people are not always decorative, but they are better than whitewash, and give a homely look to the room.

Representatives of the following classes may be found in almost every barrack-room. There is the man who never thinks or speaks of anything outside his company or regiment. He spends all his time cleaning his things, and would be like a fish out of water if pipeclay were abolished. It is his element. This sort of old soldier, however, is fast disappearing, which is a pity.

The same cannot be said of the next class of man to be mentioned, for if *he* could be made to disappear it would be better for all concerned. I allude to the man who does not care anything about soldiering, and who was only driven to it through drink, hunger, or, it may be, crime. He is dirty, disorderly, and disobedient. He does not do his own work, and he takes particular care not to do that of any one else. If he is not in prison or in cells, he is shamming in hospital.

I once knew a driver of this nature in the Horse Artillery. He always absented himself or went sick on the approach of hard work, as, for instance, after the battery had been route-marching and the horses and harness were particularly dirty. The authorities could do nothing with him; but he was brought to his senses by a barrack-room court-martial, held by those who were tired of doing his work. When this sort of man gets drunk he does not go quietly to bed like some old soldiers, who gain good conduct rings by doing so, but he is noisy, quarrelsome, and in all ways a great nuisance.

Men whose talk is coarse are objectionable companions in a barrack-room. So

are those who are continually asking for the loan of things, and those whose word cannot be trusted. The bully of a room torments recruits and all of whom he is not afraid. The "lawyer" is one who is always "groucing" or grumbling. If there is a grievance to be had he will have it. He has the regulations and customs of the service at his finger-ends, but yet he never seems to be able to get his "rights." Those who know him say that his only pleasure is to be displeased, and that he does not want to be satisfied.

No subject can be broached upon which the "lawyer" is not ready to lay down the law; and as for arguing, if you say that a thing is black, he will prove to you that it cannot be anything else but white. I knew two "lawyers," belonging to different regiments, who got into an argument as to which of their respective corps went the farther up the Nile. Not only did they try in the end to persuade each other by fists, but they were near getting their regiments into a free fight, it being Christmas-time, when soldiers are wont to take their "enjoyment" pugnaciously.

The author of "The Queen's Service"

says: "Those who have not actively experienced what a barrack-room, crowded with noisy, foul-mouthed, and more or less drunken men, means at night cannot conceive what a man who is in the slightest degree sensitive feels at such times. The utter loneliness, engendered by his inability to 'muck it' with his companions, is unspeakable."

Is not this picture a little overdrawn? One or two black sheep do not make a flock, and one or two bad and disagreeable characters in a barrack-room ought not to bring us to the conclusion that the majority are anything else than cheerful, obliging men, who live peaceably together. The majority are clean, smart soldiers, upon whose word and conduct you can rely. It is the minority and not the majority who are bad, and for the comfort of the latter the former should be repressed by stern discipline, or formed into a criminal corps and kept by themselves. The service will not be what it ought to be if they are allowed to make the moral atmosphere of a barrack-room unwholesome and disgusting for respectably born and fairly educated lads. Of course a certain amount of skylarking and practical

joking are inevitable amongst those, the greater number of whom have only lately left school, and who enjoy good animal spirits; but what should not be tolerated is profane and obscene language.

Perhaps the most disagreeable thing in a barrack-room, physically, for one who is not to the manner born, is the foul air that he has to breathe at night. True, there are plenty of windows and ventilators, and the doctors are always saying that they should be kept open; but most of the occupants of a barrack-room are afraid of night air (as if there could be any other kind of air at night), and shrink from the slightest suspicion of a draught. How is it that people are content to breathe the dirtiest air—air that has passed several times through the lungs of twenty or thirty men, some dogs, and other barrack-room pets,[1] when they would not even wash their hands in water that had been used by another?

[1] Curious, and to outsiders almost repulsive, are some of the pets that are secreted in barrack-rooms. I remember saying to a man, around whose neck a horrid white rat with a hairless tail was twining itself: "Do you really like that thing?" "Sir," he replied, very earnestly, while his eyes suffused with moisture, "I could not live without him."

The young soldier who objects to this or anything else in a barrack-room should reflect that he has the remedy in his own hands. Let him be steady and work hard, and before long he will become a sergeant, get a bunk or small room of his own, and enjoy the greater comfort of the sergeants' mess. In the meantime, each man should, for the sake of others, if not for his own sake, be clean and self-respectful in his talk and habits. As when each householder sweeps before his own door the whole street becomes clean, so when each man in a barrack-room is kind and considerate to others, the room is not an unpleasant place to live in. Certainly one man may cloud its happiness, just as another may act upon it like sunshine.

The practical jokes perpetrated in barrack-rooms are many, but we shall only mention the barrack-room, or drum-head, court-martial. This most frequently takes place when a "chum" has been guilty of some such heinous crime as eating a comrade's bread, or—worst of all crimes in a soldier's eyes—tale-bearing. On the night chosen for the court-martial a president and four members of the court are selected from

amongst the men in the room in which the delinquent resides. Two other men, not necessarily from the same room, are chosen to act as escort to the prisoner. These latter are armed with wet mops, and walk one on each side of the prisoner, and on the slightest ebullition of temper on the part of their charge, they apply the mops about his head pretty freely. The court opens, and all the circumstances of the case are gone into; the prisoner is invariably found guilty, and punishment awarded according to the degree of his offence. Tossing in a blanket and ducking in a bath are perhaps the most frequent penalties inflicted.

"Chaplains are required to render all the spiritual assistance in their power to officers and their families as well as to the families of the men, whether on the 'married roll' or not, and to the men themselves, whom they are to regard in every respect as their parishioners." It is evident that in order to conscientiously carry out this "Queen's Regulation" a chaplain must spend much time in visiting the married quarters and barrack-rooms.

When passing barrack-rooms I have often

been asked to go in, and the only thing that made me dislike doing so when a junior chaplain was the standing to attention of the inmates, and the difficulty of putting them at their ease. I can now make them feel that I want them to treat me as their parson, rather than as an officer, and have learned that when soldiers respect a chaplain they do not object to the regulation which orders them to give him a military salute—that there are very few of them like an old soldier who used to say that a certain chaplain had the effect of making him drink, for whenever he saw him coming, if there were a public-house near, he always went into it to avoid having to salute him.

When a chaplain goes into a barrack-room and sits on a form or on a man's cot, and talks to a group of soldiers who are cleaning up their things for parade or guard-mounting next day, he learns from them their sentiments and way of looking at things as their own officers could not. Of course, if he is to establish friendly relations with the men, he must not force religious talk or Bible reading upon them when visiting through their rooms. He would not do this in the rooms of the officers,

and he ought to remember that there are men of different denominations in a barrack-room, and that no one likes to be preached to by a visitor. A kindly laugh and friendly "How are you?" may do as much good, and be quite as religious, on certain occasions, as a tract or a prayer. And any little civility or kindness you can show a soldier is sure to be returned to the very best of his ability.

One day last winter I sat down to have a yarn with the men of one room round the fire. Before long a man got up, went to his kit box, and producing a cigarette, asked me with the grace of a perfect gentleman to accept it, as he had nothing else to offer.

CHAPTER IV

BARRACK-ROOM BABBLE

THE fact that some inmates of barrack-rooms do not filter their language is very tormenting to those who have been brought up to dislike stupid blasphemy and coarse stories. In reference to the former, a sermon of mine which I sometimes give against bad language begins as follows:—"What is the bloody use of a bloody man using the bloody word 'bloody' every bloody time he opens his bloody mouth." I go on to say that I heard a conversation in classical English like that as I was passing a barrack-room. Then follows an explanation that there is nothing sanguinary about "bloody," but that it is merely an abbreviation of "By our Lady," and that it is very foolish to use a word so often without knowing even its meaning.

An Irish soldier in the last Boer War

was stooping down unloading forage. A Boer shell entered the ground five yards from him. He did not look up, but said to himself, "Ach, go to blazes with ye!" Mere force of habit suggested these words, for the man certainly did not wish the explosive to burst and bring blazes to him.

A Scotch girl, talking of her brother, said: "Jem does swear awfully," and then added after a moment's reflection: "To be sure, it is a great set-off to conversation." Many young soldiers are, it is to be feared, of the same opinion. They think that they ought to "swear like a trooper" and be "full of strange oaths." The better sort of men, however (and they are not a few), are of a different opinion. Sailor: "Want to buy a parrot, lady?" Lady: "Does he swear?" Sailor: "No, this one don't; but if you pay two bob more I can get a very choice article what curses beautifully."

There are at least a few men in every barrack-room who consider a cursing soldier anything but a "choice article." One I knew who put down bad language in his room in this way. Whenever it began he would move away, good-humouredly remarking that the language was getting too emphatic.

The author of "Through the Ranks to a Commission" tells how when he became a sergeant he told the men in the tent or room of which he had charge that he would not allow bad language, and that if they wished to please him they must give it up. "The men," he says, "all promised that they would do their best, and it was really wonderful how they succeeded." An occasional oath would break out, but when the sergeant looked at the offender with disapproval he would go to him and say: "I am very sorry, sergeant, but really I quite forgot."

Considering the many languages with which Tommy Atkins comes into contact, it is not surprising that military slang should be unique in phraseology and grotesque in idea. Many words are the outcome of highly exaggerated metaphor, while others are simply imports from foreign languages, with slightly altered orthography. Of foreign words the most common is "charpoy," Hindustanee for a wooden bedstead, and colloquially applied in the army to both bed and bedding. From the same language there is "budgee," a clock, and "bobbagee," a cook. Egyptian campaigners are respon-

sible for the introduction of "sakina," a knife, and "kobreet," a lucifer match—words they picked up in Egypt. Bread has various names. The Hindustanee "rootee" is the most common, followed by "mungi" and "mungaree" from Malta."

The bad liquor which natives who can kill the British soldier no other way make for him is called "razors," and the water which Tommy's best friends would have him substitute for it he calls "pawnee." He who stands a drink is said to "stick it," and is called "felix," though the result is very often anything but a happy one. Of the man who has become intoxicated with too many so-called "friendly" glasses it is said that he "has a steamer in him."

The more observant Tommies noticed that men who grumble at the quality of their food manage to put away a good quantity, so, in course of time, "scoffer" became synonymous with big-eater, and "scoff" with food.

No doubt the word "quiff," meaning the curl of hair to which brave men give a final touch before sallying out of barracks to conquer fair women, is connected with the French "coif" and "coiffer," to dress

the hair. "Pee-hee" is the name given to a toady. "To act the goat" is to play the fool; a "yapper" means a man who talks incessantly; "breezing" is the expressive term for boasting.

Trumpeters are called "fiddlers," and a sergeant-drummer "Drummy." "Roughs" are the rough-riders who have on their arm a worsted spur. To grumble is to "chew the fat" or "the rag." Coal carrying is called ironically "regimental sports." To clean equipment is to "sammy" or to "soldier." A lie is known as a "chancer." When men box it is called a "scrapping match" or a case of "dooks up." "Off his chump" or "off his onion" or "off his rocket" means that a man is mad. A great-coat is a "shawl," shirts are "fleshers," and boots are "ammunitions." The guard-room (prisoners' room) is variously styled the "net," "trap," "clink," "dust-hole," "cage," "digger," or "dogs' home."

A man who is late for any duty is said to be "pushed" or "dragged." A non-commissioned officer under arrest is "on the pegs" or "for it," and will have to "toe the line" or be "on the carpet"; but if merely brought before the adjutant for some trifling

neglect, it is a "spin" or a "wheel." A fellow who has been bested in a bargain has "sold a dog" or "pup," or "done a winger." A lance-corporal is a "Lance Jack," and his stripe, from its shape, is the "dog's elbow." An enquiry as to next day's routine is usually put as "What's the hookum?" A soldier who is muddled with drink is "in the rats," whilst a teetotal one is "on the tack," "on the bung," "on the dead," or has "put the peg in." "Chancing his arm" or "chancing his socks" or "mits" means that a non-commissioned officer is acting in a way that risks his losing the stripes on his arm. Showing kit is "rag fair."

Turning to bugle calls, the "last post," which sounds at 10 P.M., is "black hole." At 10.30 ("lights out") darkness envelopes the barracks, from which fact arises the frequent and expressive threat, "I'll knock your lights out."

The commanding officer's call, which notifies the disposal of offenders of the previous day, is called "satisfaction." The defaulters' call, in corps where the drum is used, is known as "the taps"; but if by bugle, it's "the baby crying," or still more

commonly the invitation to pack drill is supposed to say :—

> "Come to your mother,
> My fat-headed brother,
> Oh! come to your mother, dear boy!"

But indeed there is not much barrack-room babble either during the day or at night. Recruits are afraid of revealing their inexperience, and the older soldiers have learned that it is not wise for a man to say all that he knows. At night for their own comfort the men insist on quiet being maintained. The loud talker like the loud snorer draws a volley of boots upon himself.

I am afraid that what talk there is in a barrack-room is far too much about women, though chivalry and respect for mothers and sisters should prevent this. The men chaff each other about their choice of girls. They have names for them, too, besides those they were christened, such as "Long Sue," "Black Sal," and "Carroty Susan."

CHAPTER V

NICKNAMES IN THE ARMY

ALMOST every corps in the army has a nickname. Several have more than one, and there are a few that are designated in the same way. This last is the case with the 1st Royal Dragoons, the Scotch Greys, and the old 87th Regiment. All three are called the "Bird-catchers," because they took from the French standards with eagles upon them.

The 1st battalion of Life Guards are called "the Cheeses," because when they were remodelled in 1788 members of old families would not serve in them, saying they were no longer composed of gentlemen, but of cheesemongers. The regiment is also known as "Piccadilly Butchers" and "Patent Safeties."

The Royal Horse Guards are "The Blues," "Oxford Blues." The 1st Dragoon

Guards the "K.D.G.'s," "The Trades Union." The 2nd Dragoon Guards "The Bays," "The Rusty Buckles." The 6th Dragoon Guards have been nicknamed "Tichborne's Own," since the famous trial of Arthur Orton, Sir Roger Tichborne having served in the regiment.

The 7th Dragoon Guards are known as "Strawboots," because at Warburg, having worn out their boots, they covered their feet with straw bands. Their other names are "The Black Horse" and "Virgin Mary's Guard."

The 2nd Dragoons are the "Scots Greys" and "Old Jocks." The 5th Lancers are called "The Daily Advertisers," "The Red Breasts." The 6th Dragoons are "The Old Inniskillings."

The 9th Lancers are known as the "Delhi Spearmen." The sobriquet had its birth at the Siege of Delhi, where the 9th used their lances to some purpose.

The 7th Hussars were nicknamed "The Old Saucy Seventh" in the Peninsular War. Another name for them is "Young Eyes." The old 36th Foot were also called saucy—"The Saucy Greens," from the facings they then had.

During the same war some men belonging to the 11th Hussars were taken prisoners in a fruit garden. Since then the regiment is styled "The Cherry-pickers," also the "Cherubims," from their crimson overalls. The 19th Hussars are known as "The Dumpies," on account of the diminutive size of the men when the regiment was first raised. At Salamanca the 12th Lancers, because of their courage and smartness, won the name of the "Supple Twelfth."

The 13th Hussars are known as the "Ragged Brigade." The name was first given them in the Peninsular War, where, owing to hard work falling to their lot, they were anything but presentable. At Emsdorff the 15th Hussars earned the name of the "Fighting Fifteenth," by their gallant conduct in defeating five battalions of the French. The badge of the 17th Lancers is a "death's head," and their motto "Or Glory." On this account they are known as the "Death or Glory Boys." The regiment, when commanded by Lord Bingham, was nicknamed "Bingham's Dandies," from the smartness of its turn out.

The Grenadier Guards were at one time allowed to augment their pay by working

for private individuals in plain clothes, which led to their being designated "Coal-heavers." They are also known as "Old Eyes," and "Bermuda Exiles." The 1st Foot are "Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard." When the Regiment was the Regiment de Douglas in the French service, a dispute arose between it and the Picardy Regiment as to which was the older. The latter laid claim to having been on duty on the night after the crucifixion, whereupon the Regiment de Douglas suggested that they would not have slept on duty, and averred that they formed Pilate's bodyguard.

The Coldstreams' distinctive name comes from the village on the Scottish Border, whence they started with Monk to restore Charles II. They had been in the Parliamentary service, and when paraded before the newly-restored King, the former "rebel" regiment laid down their arms as the symbol of their surrender. Then the King ordered them to take up their arms as "The Second Guards," but not a man stirred. Monk rode up to the King and told him that the regiment that had restored the King to his throne refused to be called "second" to any in his service. The King saw the point, and

ordered the "Coldstream" Guards to take up arms. It was done, and the motto, "Second to None," made the device of the regiment.

The 2nd Foot were nicknamed "Kirke's Lambs" from its badge of the "Paschal Lamb" and the name of its colonel. Their other name is "The Sleepy Queen's," from their carelessness at Almeida in allowing General Brennier to escape. The 102nd are also known as "The Lambs."

The 3rd Foot are "The Buffs" or "The Nut-crackers." The 4th are "Resurrectionists," because in one battle they all seemed to be killed, but they rose up and killed. The sobriquet of "The Shiners" was given to the 5th Foot in 1764, from its clean, smart appearance. It is also "The Fighting Fifth." The 6th are "Guise's Geese." The 7th "Elegant Extracts," because at one time its officers had all been chosen from other corps. The 8th or Liverpool Regiment are called "The Leather Hats."

The Norfolk Regiment (9th Foot) have been satirised as "Holy Boys" since the Peninsular War, when the men of the regiment are reputed to have sold their Bibles to buy drink. This story, however,

is denied by those who declare that the name was suggested by the Spaniards mistaking "Britannia"—the regimental badge—for the image of the Virgin Mary.

The 14th or the Yorkshire (West Riding) Regiment are the "Old and Bold." The East Yorkshire Regiment (15th Foot) being on one occasion during the American War short of ammunition, continued to snap their muskets, thereby deceiving the advancing enemy, who faced about and retired. Hence their name of "Snappers."

The Bedfordshire Regiment (16th Foot) was formerly known as the "Peace-makers," having no battles embroidered on their colours.

The 10th and the 62nd Foot were called "The Springers," from their rapid pursuit of the Americans during the war. The 20th Foot are "The Two Tens," and also "The Minden Boys." The 55th are "The Two Fives." Its number XL. gave the name to the 40th Foot of "The Excellers." From its number also and the amount of a lieutenant's pay, the 76th were called "The Old Seven and Sixpennies." The last are also known as "The Immortals," because in 1806 most of the men were wounded; also "The

Pigs," from their badge, or their appetite on manœuvres. The 77th were nicknamed the "Pot Hooks" from the two sevens—its number.

The 45th were "The Old Stubborns" during the Peninsular War. A similar name —"The Old Toughs"—was given to the 103rd for its conduct in India. The 46th were called "The Lacedæmonians," from one of their colonels making a long speech under a heavy fire about the Lacedæmonians and their discipline.

The "Have-a-cake Lads" are the West Riding Regiment (33rd Foot). A custom of carrying oat cakes on the point of their swords, in order to entice the hungry to enlist, was prevalent among the sergeants recruiting for that regiment about the time of the Peninsular War.

The Northamptonshire Regiment (48th Foot) is otherwise designated the "Steel-backs." The stoicism of the men when being flogged is responsible for the appendage. The regiment is, however, prouder of being called the "Heroes of Talavera," having done good service at that battle.

The 51st regiment are the "Coalies," because of the initials K.O.L.I., which are

on their accoutrements. The 68th are "The Faithful Durhams," than which no name could be more honourable.

The facings of regiments are no longer distinctive, so that nicknames for this reason must now cease; but there used to be many. For instance, the 47th Foot were called "The Cauliflowers," from their facings, and the 53rd "The Brickdusts." The 58th "The Black Cuffs," the 59th "The Lily Whites," the 70th "The Glasgow Greys," the 97th "The Celestials." The Rifle Brigade are called "The Sweeps," from their dark coloured uniform.

If the 50th Regiment were called "The Gallant 50th" for its gallantry at the battle of Vimiera, 1808, they were also called "The Blind Half Hundred," from so many men suffering from ophthalmia in Egypt, and "The Dirty Half Hundred," from the men in action wiping their faces with their black facings during the Peninsular War.

The 56th are "The Pompadours," because their facings were purple, the favourite colour of Madame de Pompadour. The 57th were called "The Die Hards," from its colonel (Inglis) calling to the men when he was himself mortally wounded:

"Die hard, my men, die hard!" The 63rd were known at one time as "The Blood-suckers." This, no doubt, was intended as a compliment, and is one for men of war. Nelson called a detachment of the 69th Foot his "Old Agamemnons" at the naval battle of St Vincent, 1797. Though all our regiments deserve it, the 81st is the only one entitled "Loyal." The 83rd were called "Fitch's Grenadiers," from its first colonel's name, and its men being small. The 87th were nicknamed "The Old Fogs," also "The Faugh-a-Ballagh Boys," from "Fag-au-Bealac," which is the Irish for "Clear the Way," its cry at Barossa.

The 88th are called "The Connaught Rangers," and another name, not suitable for polite ears, from its gallantry in action, and irregularity in quarters. The Dublin Fusiliers are "The Blue-caps." A despatch of Nana Sahib was intercepted, in which he referred to "those blue-capped English soldiers that fight like devils." The name stuck. At the siege of Lucknow the bridge of Char Bagh was raked by four guns, and defended on the flanks by four others. "Who is to carry it?" asked Outram.

"My Blue-caps," said Havelock, and they did. The 89th were called "Blayney's Bloodhounds," from its colonel's name and its skill in tracking Irish rebels; also "The Rollickers." The 100th are "The Old Hundred" and "The Centipedes."

At Delhi in 1857, the 101st Regiment fought in their shirt sleeves, and have since then been nicknamed "The Dirty Shirts."

The Royal Marines are "The Joeys," "The Jollies," "The Little Grenadiers."

The Royal Engineers are called "Mud Larks" and "Muddlers," the Army Service Corps the "Murdering Thieves" or the "London Thieving Corps." The transport part of the Army Service Corps are known as Pickford's Hussars or the "Muck Train."[1] The Royal Army Medical Corps are "Pills," "Linseed Lancers," "Poultice Whollopers." The Ordnance Store Corps are "The Sugarstick Brigade."

We chaplains rejoice in the name of "Sky Pilots." I say "rejoice," for surely it is our happiness as well as our duty to try and pilot Tommy Atkins to One who can strengthen him against the great temptations to which he is exposed in this world,

[1] A corruption of "moke," or mule train.

and bring him to a better. May some of us, when we die, or leave the service, deserve to have it said of us:

"And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter world's, and led the way."

Of the nicknames which Thomas Atkins gives to his comrades the following are the most common:—"Andy," "Beaky," "Boxer," "Buck," "Chesty," "Chico," "Chumpy," Cruity," "Daddy," "Darky," "Dodger," "Figgy," "Footy," "Gassy," "Hookey," "Jigger," "Knocker," "Nosey," "Nobby," "Scabby," "Shiner," "Snuffy," "Scut," "Smiler," "Steady," "Spud," "Tricky," "Towney," "Tubby," and "Tug."

There is a "Nobby" Clarke, a "Shiner" Green, a "Spud" Murphy, a "Hookey" Walker, and a "Knocker" Williams in all corps.

The men soon find out the nicknames the officers have for each other, and use them when talking, as they so often do, about these gentlemen. They nearly always call the officer commanding their battalion the "Old Man."

CHAPTER VI

MARKS OF DISTINCTION

THERE was much indignation in the army when some years ago the territorial system was introduced, and regiments were no longer to have numerical designations. Yet the protests would probably not have been made had people known that giving the names of places to regiments was simply going back to a former system, and that in 1791 regiments were called by much the same local names as now.

Naturally, any peculiarity of dress or custom which speaks of the brave deeds it has done in the past is prized by a regiment. The rule is that officers wear their sashes on the left shoulder, and that sergeants wear them on the right. There is an exception in the Somersetshire Light Infantry. In this regiment the sashes of sergeants are worn in the same way as

those of officers, because, when all the officers were killed at Culloden, the sergeants took their places, and performed the duties of officers until the end of the battle.

One day I noticed in the streets of Valetta, in Malta, several soldiers with badges on the backs of their helmets. "What a drunken lot!" I said to myself, for I thought that they had become intoxicated after landing from the troopship, and had turned the front of their helmets to the back. When I came up to them I found that they had the sphinx as a badge on the back as well as on the front of their helmets; and, on enquiring the reason, found that it is because of the gallantry displayed by the regiment in repulsing the enemy when attacked simultaneously in front and rear, in the action of the 21st of March 1801, before Alexandria. The men I had seen belonged to that regiment now called the Gloucester, but formerly known as the 28th or "Slashers." It is said that their colonel, when he saw that they were surrounded, thus addressed them: "28th, what confoundedly lucky devils you are! This day you must either be distinguished or ex-

tinguished." The 28th preferred the first alternative, and the rear ranks faced to the right-about, and, fighting back to back, the enemy was repulsed. For this reason they wear the regimental badge on the back and on the front of their helmets, and are therefore termed the "Fore and Afts."

There is a difference between standards and guidons. The former are carried by dragoon guards, the latter by dragoons. Hussar regiments have no standards. The officers of the 7th Hussars in undress uniform are permitted to wear white collars and cuffs, a privilege shared by the officers of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

Some one or other of the little ceremonies observed by regiments sometimes catches the eye at Aldershot on anniversaries, as, for instance, when the Cheshire regiment (the 22nd) marches past with the colours and every helmet garlanded with oak-leaves, in memory of their conduct at Dettingen, where, as King George told them, they stood firm as their native oak.

The latest nickname for this regiment is the "Lightning Conductors." It was

given because in the Irish manœuvres of 1899 several men were struck by lightning during a night march.

The badge of the Leicestershire Regiment is a tiger with "Hindustan" superscribed. and the drummers wear tiger-skin aprons on State occasions instead of the ordinary leather aprons. These are to mark "the exemplary conduct of the corps during its service in India from 1804 to 1823."

The 62nd Foot wears a splash on its buttons to commemorate its defence of the Castle of Carrickfergus against the French in 1760, when the ammunition being expended, it used its buttons for bullets.

The officers of the 104th are allowed to wear scarlet bands on their forage caps, as a mark of the distinguished services of the regiment in India.

The courage and discipline displayed by the Border Regiment in covering the retreat of the British at Fontenoy is commemorated now by the badge of laurel wreath which they wear.

The Lancashire Fusiliers have a regimental custom of wearing Minden roses on the anniversary of the battle, because

the men of that regiment were posted near some gardens, from which they took roses to adorn their hats during the battle.

A silver wreath is borne round the staff of the Queen's colour of the Warwickshire Regiment to commemorate the devotion of Lieutenants Melville and Coghill in their heroic effort to save that colour in South Africa on the 22nd of January 1879. This wreath was introduced in consequence of Her Majesty having decorated the Queen's colour of the regiment with a wreath.

The East Kent Regiment wears buff facings, because it is descended from the "Holland Regiment," which the London Guilds organised in 1572, when the Dutch were in revolt against Spain. The regiment's time-honoured privilege of marching through the city of London with drums beating and colours flying is derived from the train bands of Elizabeth's Day.

So, too, what is now the King's Own Scottish Borderers has the exclusive privilege of beating up for recruits in the streets of Edinburgh at any time without asking the leave of the Lord Provost, because of the bravery displayed

by their regimental ancestors at the Battle of Killiecrankie.

The origin of many regimental customs is unknown. No one knows, for instance, why the Royal Welsh Fusiliers wear "the flash," which is a bow of broad black silk ribbon with long ends affixed to the back of the tunic-collar. Probably it is retained to commemorate some distinctive method of dressing the hair in use in the regiment in days of queues and hair-powder.

On 26th September 1777, the Americans were defeated by our "Light Battalion," which so incensed them that they sent a message that "The Light Battalion" need never expect quarter. To this the Light Battalion replied that they were "quite ready," and dipped their feathers red (*how* is not explained) in token of defiance. A company of one battalion of what is now called the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry was in the engagement, and this is commemorated by the regiment's now wearing two red feathers on their helmet plates.

Talking of feathers, we may mention that a white plume is worn by the Northumberland Fusiliers, because, when

the Comte de Grasse attempted to relieve the Island of St Lucia, they were so far from showing the white feather, that they took the white plumes from the caps of their opponents, the French Grenadiers.

CHAPTER VII

FOOD, CLOTHES, PAY

UNTIL a few years ago soldiers ate in the rooms where they slept. This was before the feeding of Atkins was improved, and perhaps it did not much matter where he took the eight bites which was said then to constitute a soldier's dinner. Now the contractors are forced to be so honest, the meat is so well chosen, and the cooking so good, that soldiers really do want the dining-room which is provided for each company.

The "dinner" bugle-call is the most popular one in the army. The recruit with the worst ear for music soon learns—

> "Oh! come to the rootee war, boys,
> Come to the rootee war."

To others the bugle seems to say: "Pick them up, pick them up, hot potatoes." But now there is a great deal more for

Photo] [*Reinhold Thiele & Co.,*
66, Chancery Lane,

A FIELD KITCHEN.

Tommy to pick up in his dining-room than hot potatoes. There are hot beef and mutton, well cooked in various ways, the vegetables in season, pies, puddings, jam rolls, etc. I often go into the cook-houses and talk to the cooks about this matter, and when they show me the bills of fare hung up on a wall for each day in the week, and the "bake," or "boil," or "stew," or "curry" they are engaged cooking, I cannot help jokingly exclaiming: "It is a banquet! If I had got half as much of varied, well-cooked food as that when a boy at school, what a fine man I would be now!"

It shows how little some civilians know of the army that a lady asked the writer not long ago if soldiers were not half-starved. "So little is this the case," was my answer, "that I venture to say they are better fed than your sons who are at expensive public schools."

Nor is the breakfast provided for Thomas Atkins inferior to his dinner, excepting only the tea, which is sometimes boiled an hour instead of "drawn" the proper three minutes, and served up in cans which held the soup the day before, only slightly, it may

be, cleaned. When in this tea the men soak their bread, they call the mixture "slingers,' because of the facility with which it slings down. To the "slingers," however, there is now provided an accompaniment which varies daily, changes being rung on butter, jam, fish, liver and bacon, eggs, etc.

As some recruits may feel it strange having to make up their bed in the morning in the barrack-room and take it down again at night, instead of this being done by a feminine hand, so they are, no doubt, a little astonished at the rough and tumble methods of military dining-rooms. No table-cloth, no glasses, a basin instead of cup and saucer, and so on. Then the mode of eating of many is peculiar. When they use knives and not fingers only their mouths seem to be in danger of being cut to pieces. Lumps of meat are occasionally taken off plates and cut on the bare tables. After dinner the washing up of things is expeditious rather than nice. A man is occasionally heard to say: "I wish some of you recruits would look sharp and wear out a shirt, for I'm nearly run out of dish-cloths."

At a quarter to four or five o'clock—all his meals are a quarter before some hour—

Tommy takes afternoon tea and what is left of his bread. With this he has generally jam or marmalade; but occasionally he "takes the cake," or indulges in that luxury. In some corps men who wish it may have a basin of soup when they come in for the night, free of charge, and in almost every one they can buy an excellent supper at the coffee shop for two or three pence. The Canteen fund usually provides hot coffee for cavalry men going before breakfast to riding-school, bread and cheese to soldiers route-marching or doing any duty that keeps them late for dinner.

In a private house we may grumble at our cook without redress, but in barracks an officer goes round each dining-room and asks if there are any complaints. A man once said to an officer of my acquaintance that there was something wrong with the meat on his plate. "Let me taste it," said the officer, who suspected that there was not much the matter, and, sitting down, he ate every morsel of it. If a soldier think that the orderly man has not fairly "made up" the dinners, that is to say, divided the cooked meat so that each man shall have as nearly as possible three-

quarters of a pound, inclusive of fat and bone,[1] or if he fancy that the meat is not as good as the contractor was bound to give, or if it seem to him that good meat has been spoiled by bad cooking, or if he have any other reasonable and not frivolous objection, he can complain to the orderly officer, and the matter will be carefully investigated. An army has been described as a beast with a big stomach, but with no bowels of compassion, and it is well that at last we have learned that this beast should be fed —that, in fact, men fight on their stomachs.

And the best of it is that the improvements in the food of our soldiers costs the country nothing; it is effected by economy, especially in dripping, and by precautions being taken against peculation.

One kind of waste, however, still goes on which soldiers should stop themselves. They eat too fast, and do not give to each mouthful the thirty-two bites which are required by digestion, and in order to get the greatest amount of nourishment out of food. "What! done already?" I often say to men

[1] A soldier's ration of meat is three-quarters of a pound a day at home and a pound abroad. It should, I think, be the other way about.

coming out after being only eight minutes in at dinner. "You will never be Gladstones" (some of them don't want to be) "if you eat so fast."

But good food has to be supplemented by warm clothing or else half of it will go to supply deficient animal heat, so it is well that, compared to other armies, ours may be said to be well clothed.

A question of uniform was agitating the mind of George IV., and at a review he asked a soldier who had been in many battles if he had to fight again in what dress he would like to do it. "In my shirt-sleeves, please your Majesty," was the reply. This would be workman-like, but it would not please the ladies who send recruits into the army, so we have now come to the sensible arrangement of having a fighting-dress and a courting-dress for Tommy.[1] Indeed, it is very unphilosophical to take away all the gold lace and other finery from uniform. War is too horrid to be seen. There is no romance in the act of killing, and the more "pomp and circumstance" and pea-

[1] This gentleman is very particular about the make of his clothes. In reference to trousers, for instance, he likes "the strides to be cut a bit saucy-like over the trotters."

cocking there is in time of peace, the less people will think of the shamble-side of the business.

Talking of clothes leads me to remark that the tax-payers should respect the livery they put on their soldiers, and should never exclude them from any place only because they wear it. It is, of course, different in war time, but during peace there are snobs who have to be told continually that "the widow's uniform is not the soldier man's disgrace." What is the good of paying thirty-five pounds for the tunic of the sergeant-drummer of the Guards, or ten pounds for the fur caps of even the privates in those corps, if "the cloth" is not to be respected?

The payment which would most content our soldiers would be to be treated with some degree of the respect that a German soldier receives. I often ask sergeants when leaving the service why they do not stay on, and they generally answer: "We would like to do so, only we are looked down upon by civilians."

At the present time our army is not only the best fed and clothed in the world, but, with the possible exception of the small American army, it is the best paid. I once

told a German officer the pay received by our military artificers and sergeants in the Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery Army Service Corps and Ordnance Department. He seemed quite incredulous, and said that no nation could afford to pay their army like that. The most ordinary private receives one shilling per diem, and with allowances in the shape of lodging, food, and clothes, his remuneration is worth about fifteen shillings a week. When he gets good-conduct rings he is paid for his virtue, which is more than most of us are. Then there are more or less paying billets which a well-behaved, tolerably handy soldier can get at home, and there are many more of them abroad.

If a German soldier, who gets threepence a day pay, or a French, a Belgian, an Italian Tommy with their half-penny a day, or a Russian soldier with twopence of our money a *month*, or a Turkish or Greek soldier who is only paid a trifle occasionally—if one of these cheap warriors were to come to England and ask at some post-office for "The Advantages of the Army," a pamphlet which would be given to him for nothing, what would he think? He would consider riches, beyond the dreams

of avarice, the pay, good-conduct pay, working pay, extra-duty pay, reserve pay, gratuities, pensions, and advantages in addition to pay therein described.

In the French army a colonel is not allowed to give a money prize for skill in shooting or anything else, even of his own money, because a soldier should consider it an honour to serve his country for nothing. In our army every kind of proficiency is remunerated.

Then, when comparing his pay with that of a working man, the British soldier should remember that he is paid for Sundays and Christmas Day, and also, with a deduction, for the time he may be in hospital. He has too, when serving at home, a month or six weeks furlough on full pay. And he may be sure of this, that if he have not enough ability to gain promotion, with the higher pay of such rank, in civil life he would never have been anything more than an ordinary labourer. Of course there are exceptions, and as a man may be following the plough who would make a good sergeant-major, so a private may be wasting energy in barrack-squares which would have brought him praise and pudding in a more peaceful pursuit.

Photo] ON GUARD. *[Reinhold Thiele & Co. 66, Chancery Lane.*

CHAPTER VIII

ON GUARD

WHAT does Mr Atkins do for his food, clothes, and pay—what is his work? A young soldier is much pleased when, having toiled through his recruit's drill, he becomes a duty man, but the first duty which he has to do may not be altogether to his liking. It may be to go on guard, and there are more pleasant occupations. I am now in Dublin, a military station, reputed in the army to have the heaviest guard-duty in the United Kingdom, so I hear from soldiers much about being on guard. They like a chaplain to occasionally look in as he passes guard-rooms and leave something to read which is neither a tract nor the life of a general.[1]

[1] I once asked a soldier in hospital what kind of book he would like me to get for him out of the library. He replied: "Well, sir, I can read almost anything, if it is not the life of a general."

The test of a battalion is the way it mounts guard. Look at its sentries and learn whether it is a "smart" or a "slack" lot. It is the adjutant's duty to inspect all armed parties before marching off, but especially guards. Any untidiness on guard-mounting parade is severely punished, and, on the other hand, the cleanest man is selected to be for the day commanding officer's orderly, a duty which is coveted because it counts as a guard.

The guard-duty of a garrison is divided among the battalions stationed in it, so that the men of each shall have as nearly as possible the same number of nights in bed. The average number of these a soldier should have, in order that his health may not suffer, are four.

In London, Dublin, and sometimes in other places, the band of the battalion furnishing guard accompanies it, and plays during the ceremony of changing guard. This change of guard takes place every morning. The rule is that each man on guard does two hours' sentry-go, and then has four hours' rest. For this reason three men are detailed for each post, so that out of twenty-

four hours' guard-duty a man spends eight hours on sentry.

The corporal of the guard marches the reliefs to each post. The orders are then given by the old sentry to his relief. When "all correct" has been reported, he relinquishes his post and sentry-box to him, and is marched back to join his guard.

On active service a chain of sentries are posted round the camp to prevent it being surprised, and soldiers employed in this way are said to be on "out-post duty." Of course, to do this duty properly, sentries must practise in time of peace, and this is why, though there are fewer than used to be the case, so many of them are still kept upon the go. And sentry-go is very disagreeable work at night; sleepless civilians who "count every hour" pity themselves much, but would they like to be a soldier on guard with two hours on and two hours off sentry? He counts the hours, we may be sure, but his difficulty is, how *not* to fall asleep upon his weary legs. And he may be like Sir Walter Scott, who used to say: "I do not believe in ghosts, but I am afraid of them!"

One who has been through the mill

himself gives the following experience of his first sentry-go at night :—

"Slow as pass the hours on sentry by day, they cannot be compared with their leaden-footedness by night. The minutes appeared to literally crawl along, and it seemed as if three o'clock would never come. It was horribly cold, and although I tramped up and down until I was too tired to do so any longer, I was nearly frozen. At the end of the first hour an almost overwhelming desire for sleep came upon me. Struggle against it as I would, it was as much as I could do to prevent myself from giving way to it. To those who have never tried it, to walk up and down a measured beat for a couple of hours at a time may seem a very simple thing, but let them try it in the dead of the night, on a lonely post, with no company but their own thoughts, and they will very soon have a different opinion about it. I envied the prisoners in their cells; they, at least, had ten hours' undisturbed rest, from 8 P.M. to 6 A.M. every day. As the half-hours came round the stillness of the night was broken by the long-drawn cry, passed from sentry to sentry, 'Number!' and 'Al-l-'s we-ll!' by which evidence of their alertness was furnished to the sergeant of the guard. If any one failed to take up the call, he would be promptly visited by a non-commissioned officer and file of men, and the cause of his neglect ascertained."

Amusing stories are told of sentries challenging notable people, even the great Duke of Wellington, and refusing to let them pass, because, though remembering the sign, they had forgotten the countersign.

Photo] RELIEVING SENTRY. *[Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

Once, on active service, when a sentry said to a medical officer who wished to pass: "Advance one, and give the countersign!" that gentleman was unable to do so, and the sentry did his duty, and also relieved a grudge which he had cherished for some reason against the medico, by keeping him standing for a long time in a bitter night with a bayonet pointed at his breast.

A sentry stopped the carriage of a lady generally well known, but not known to him, which was out of order on the night of a court ball. The lady put her head out of the window, and told the faithful Tommy that she was the wife of a Cabinet Minister. "Beg pardon, ma'am," was the reply, "but I could not let you pass even if you were the wife of a Presbyterian minister."

Sometimes the four hours off spent in a guard-room are not much more agreeable than the two hours on sentry. Your clothes and accoutrements may be wet through, but you cannot remove them, for at any moment may come the summons: "Guard, turn out," and it has to be obeyed without the slightest delay. And the guard-room bed, being only the soft side of a deal board,

gives but little rest. Then, especially abroad, a guard-room is generally so infested with vermin that if it were burned there would be a great loss of life. The arrangements of different armies differ considerably, but the guard-rooms of all that I have seen have a family likeness, especially as regards the bed. This is made of wood, and extends the whole length of one of the walls, forming a sloping shelf, on which a dozen men can lie down at once.

It is very disagreeable to have to deal with prisoners when they are frog-marched to the guard-house, maddened by the poisonous drink that is sold to our soldiers, especially abroad. They kick, bite, destroy things in their cells, beat at the doors, and shout until nature becomes exhausted.

Sometimes the men cook their rations on guard, and the guard-room pot is quite an institution. Soup is made in it, and then, after being slightly cleaned, it becomes a tea- and coffee-pot.

Garrison guards are visited by day and night by a field-officer, who comes at uncertain hours to see that they are alert and vigilant, and to ascertain if the com-

manders thereof have any report to make. At sunset, at 9.30 P.M., and at daybreak, they also turn out for inspection under the non-commissioned officer in charge.

CHAPTER IX

FIELD-TRAINING, ROUTE-MARCHING, MUSKETRY

Not so many years ago, when it was thought that it might be as well for soldiers to learn something of their profession, an order came out that every company in every battalion should once a year be struck off all other duty for the space of about a fortnight, and that during this time the men should be trained in the work they would have to do upon active service. I am often surprised, and always interested, by the queer things I see them learning at field training, such as the making of field-kitchens and bridges, the packing of loads upon mules, the elements of field-fortification, pitching and striking tents, and so on.

In addition to this, the non-commissioned officers are also taught military sketching

Photo] [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

BRIDGING—PONTOON BRIDGE.

and reconnaissance duty. It would seem that calculating "horizontal equivalents," drawing "contours," and constructing scales "showing representative fractions" are a trial in every sense to some of them. Their feelings upon the subject were expressed by a corporal, who plaintively remarked: "This bloomin' representative-fraction business gives me the fair 'ump."

Two or three times during the course there is a night attack, to train the men to keep in touch in a night march, and not play a hide-and-seek game.

When reading about the Peninsular War, we are astonished at the speed at which soldiers marched from place to place. They seem to have moved almost as fast as they do now by railway. Can it be that the statement is true which says that when Wellington wanted an Irish regiment to reach a particular place by a given time, he promised to the men an all-round tot of grog on their arrival, that to a Scotch regiment he gave an assurance of getting their pay, and that the bait of roast-beef which he held out to an English regiment speeded its movement?

In those days the size and weight of knapsacks were, according to our present ideas, enormous; there were no such things as kit-bags, and the soldier carried every article he possessed without apparent difficulty. In the Crimean War seventy-two pounds was the regulation load for this pack animal. And his uniform then was even more unfavourable for marching in than that which is worn now. Imagine the heat of the thick black leather collar of those days in India!

There is no accomplishment so useful to a soldier as ability to march. Indeed, it is upon the feet of their soldiers that generals—even those who have heads—win their laurels.

Good shooting may seem to be of more importance, but it is not really. If soldiers get to the enemy they may frighten them, even if they do not kill them, but if they are late, or do not reach the enemy, they can neither frighten nor shoot them. This is why in Germany it is considered a most serious military crime for a soldier on the march to have to fall out because of blisters upon his feet. He is taught how to take care of them, and he is

expected to do so. I see that our soldiers in South Africa are getting sore feet from marching with only one change of boots and socks.

It is a question which European army marches best. Ours can do so as well as any in India, and on active service, as we saw on many recent occasions, but the men fall out too much when route-marching at home. Perhaps they have not enough practice. Why should troops march great distances from one station to another in India, and get into a train for very short journeys (I have seen them entrained for three miles) at home?

To improve the marching power of Mr Atkins route-marching has now become a recognised part of his work, and he hates it more than anything else he has to do, except carrying coal. He does not see the use of it in time of peace, and thinks that it is ordered by the commanding officer out of pure "cussedness."

Each regiment marches independently once a week, and there is also a weekly brigade route-march, commanded by the general of the station, in which all the troops take part. The distance marched

is at first about ten miles there and back; but this is gradually increased, and during the last week of the route-marching season there is a continuous tramp for the six week-days, so that a hundred miles, or as near that as possible, are covered.

Believing that chaplains should show an interest in every part of a soldier's work and life, I often accompany the brigade route-marches either on a flesh-and-blood, or on a steel horse. When my parish has been moved miles away, I must move with it if I am to do any work during that morning. And one gets to know soldiers very well when talking to them during a halt. They will listen all the better next parade service, if, when they are very tired, a chaplain dismounts and marches with them a few miles, telling them perhaps of foreign soldiers, or of other matters that may interest them.

One peculiarity of our soldiers is that they are very shy about singing in the open air. I am always asking them why they do not sing on the march, as continental soldiers do. At open-air services they will not join in hymns which a Sunday

or two before they may have sung "lustily, and with a good courage," in the Garrison Church.

The German soldier is taught not only to shoot, but the minutest details about the construction of his rifle. Our musketry instruction may not be so thorough, but the shooting attainments of British soldiers now compare favourably with that of foreign ones, the Boers, perhaps, being a possible exception. Unlike formerly, our soldiers practise shooting in all weather, because battles do not wait for dry, calm days. There is keen competition amongst those who aim at becoming "first-class shots" and "marksmen." Two or three days before a company go to the range they receive preliminary instruction, with lectures on the theory of musketry, etc.

At Pembroke Camp, Malta, I was amused at the way some soldiers took a question I asked. I was standing with them, looking at moving targets representing men being fired at, and I asked: "What would you take and stand where those targets are for five minutes?" They started, and said: "Not five hundred or one thousand pounds, sir." "But," I replied, "one day you may have to do this for one shilling."

It seems to me that it would pay the country to give almost any money to men who could hit any person or thing. A man would be worth not merely a thousand pounds a year, but his weight in gold, if he could bring a war to a speedier conclusion by picking off all the generals on the other side.

Photo] ARTILLERY WAITING ORDERS. [*Reinhold Thiele & Co. 66, Chancery Lane.*

CHAPTER X

MANŒUVRES

THE summing up and completion, so to say, of route-marching, field-training, spring-drill, and the other year's work of our soldiers are the manœuvres which take place when the Government think they can afford it, generally in August. The last manœuvres were on Salisbury Plain, and in Ireland there were extensive ones under Lord Roberts. It is a pity they were not in South Africa!

In the Irish manœuvres there were two armies, called respectively "red" and "blue." I was attached to the headquarters staff of the latter, and a brother chaplain to that of the former. It did us all good to be under canvas for three weeks, and such little inconveniences as rain coming in through a tent all night, or having to breakfast standing in long wet grass before a five o'clock start in the morning—of these trifles we are

ashamed to think now that so many of those who were with us then have been wounded or killed in battles that were anything but sham ones.

I enjoyed riding[1] with the troops from one day's camp to another, and seeing the operations that went on by the way. You learn more about soldiers in a week in camp than in a year in barracks. Indeed, if your tent is beside a transport company or a battery of artillery, you may learn too many conversational embellishments when the men talk to their horses as they prepare them for the march.

The army to which I belonged was supposed to be retreating, in which case the baggage goes before. As our tents then had to be struck and packed up, if we had not got out of them in good time they would have been pulled about our ears. One morning a soldier looked out from his tent at 3 A.M. on hearing the *réveille*, and said: "Why, Bill, it's the bloomin' middle of the night."

[1] I have been told that before the first manœuvres that took place in the neighbourhood of Aldershot chaplains were ordered to go through a course at the riding-school. The "Ministers' ride" was quite famous. One or two could not be taught, and they had to be carried in an ambulance waggon.

Certainly moving nearly every morning except Sunday on manœuvres, and being allowed only forty pounds of baggage, teach how many things one can do without. These frequent moves made me feel as if I belonged to a circus. One officer, who did not like turning out at unearthly hours, suggested that I should take for the text of my first sermon after a return to barracks: "Let the saints rejoice in their beds."

The farmers seemed to like us to manœuvre over their fields, as well they might, for they were more than compensated for any damage done. The harvest may fail, but manœuvres never fail to pay the farmer. The people who assembled in places along the roads to see us pass made amusing comments. "Oh, them's pretty boys, I love them all!" exclaimed one old woman. Another remarked: "If those fellows were let loose they would not be long clearing the corn." Alluding to myself in the simple uniform of a chaplain, which they did not understand, some were rather personal, and asked: "What position does that man with the beard occupy?"

It used to astonish me to see with what

order and rapidity our canvas town was built after we had arrived at a new camping-place. The big bags containing the tents were dragged from the waggons, mallets began to sound driving in the pegs, the bugle gave warning notes, and the men stood ready to raise the poles when it again sounded. Then hundreds of tents sprang up like magic all together, just as in the morning they had been struck at the same moment. As soon as possible dinner was got ready for the men and lunch for the officers, if the mess-waggons arrived in time, which they often did not. After this, perhaps, we lay down for a while, and then both officers and men used to look for a river in which to have a swim, or at least a wash. In the evening the men cleaned kits, harness, guns, etc., drew rations, attended foot parade, when the medical officers examined their feet, and executed the many duties of camp life which it would be tedious to explain.

In no circumstances is it more necessary to know the ropes than when living in a tent. If you are not careful you may pull the house down, or you may fasten the door flaps in such a way that you cannot get in. If a strong wind springs up you

must sometimes turn out at night and slacken the ropes. When it is raining, wherever you touch the canvas inside water comes through. One night during a thunderstorm it rained into the tent of an officer who was my immediate neighbour. He put up an umbrella, and this attracted lightning, which paralysed his arm for a long time. I was put up to all the ropes by the soldier who was told off to be my servant. Never surely was there a man who could pack and unpack a kit in less time; but he did not know much about the chaplain's department, for he would persist in putting out my cassock, surplice, etc., before dinner, thinking, no doubt, that that was the uniform in which I ought to go to mess!

Though called a "Flying Column," wings were not provided, and the men had to foot it all the way. Slippers were served out on the completion of the first march to be worn in camp. They were cool and easy after the ammunition boots, but some thought that it was rather a slipshod way of soldiering; they had heard of people trying to go to Heaven in silver slippers, but where those brown canvas ones would lead they did not know. The medical officers used to ask the

men continually if they had changed their socks; one replied that he had, but he had only changed them from one foot to another. This ingenuity in obeying the letter of an order while disobeying its spirit reminded me of a soldier in the military hospital at Netley, who, when told not to eat his breakfast one morning because an operation was to be performed upon him, ate the breakfast of another man!

One day we had a fight, which, though of course a sham one, was very realistic. An "Indian village," composed of houses, or, perhaps we should say, wigwams made of canvas, was erected, and this was strongly protected by earthworks. The enemy was represented by over one thousand dummies in the shape of men, and by two or three batteries of artillery. The guns were made of wood, but in size, colour, and all other respects they might have been taken for real ones. This wooden enemy was stormed at by "live" shot and shell, and riddled by the magazine rifles of the infantry. After the "cease firing" had sounded (we would not have cared to have gone before), some of us went to count the "hits," and see the general result. The shells did not do as

much damage as might have been expected, though we could see by the way the earth-works were torn that the practice had been good. Two of the wigwams of the "Indian village" were pierced, and the dummy cannons were in a few instances made into matchwood. Even the *wooden heads* of the dummy men must have understood the value of the magazine rifle, for in one poor dummy I counted the marks of twenty-one balls, and in another thirteen.

During the engagement some men were ordered to fall down and pretend to be wounded or killed. It was amusing to hear those who objected to play this game grumbling. "I don't want to be killed," or "It's not my turn to die." Then the Royal Medical Corps came and carried the wounded away on stretchers, and bandaged and splintered up their supposed injuries. After the battle those who had been lying "dead" caused considerable mirth by getting up, shaking themselves, and falling in with the other troops like ghosts amongst living men.

When bullets are fired there is always a certain amount of risk, as the general who commanded our column and his chief

staff officer discovered. A short time after the firing had ceased, a bullet passed between the heads of these two officers as they talked together; the owner of the rifle from which it was discharged had pulled the trigger accidentally while trying to extract a cartridge.

It is hungry work fighting, even sham fighting, and on returning to camp the men were quite ready for the dinner which the cooks (who had been employed in this kind of "action") had prepared for them. It consisted of Irish stew, because, as a quarter-master explained to me, it was uncertain when the battle would end, and Irish stew can hardly be cooked too much. The pleasure people take in seeing the beasts fed at the Zoo was nothing compared to the delight of the crowds of civilians who honoured our camp with a visit in seeing us at our open-air banquets. We were rather pleased at the gaping attention, for it was a cheap advertisement of the army, and we hoped that it would bring in recruits. Alas! even the Irish stew failed to do that. Only one recruit was caught, and he could only be called a *man* by courtesy. What he really

was called was "the lop-sided caricature of a half-baked militia-man."

Next to seeing us eat, our visitors seemed to be most pleased with observing the way the food was cooked. This was done in pots resting on wood fires that were lighted in trenches dug in the shape of triangles.

Happily, we had no dead to bury, so the day after the battle was a day of rest. We spent our leisure in arranging a grand camp fire and smoking concert for the evening. It was a fine sight to see hundreds of sunburnt men in different uniforms round a bonfire on which huge logs were thrown. An army service waggon served as a stage for those who gave us "songs in the night." When the assembly had dispersed, and the men had lain down upon their waterproof sheets, or were preparing to do so, the alarm sounded. What was it? Fire? A supposed enemy? "Who goes there?" "Friend." "Pass, friend, all's well," in the shape of the general, who wanted to be sure that the camp fire had not diminished discipline, and to see which corps would fall in most quickly. Quickness, however, is not everything. The regiment that assembled first forgot their rifles, and

had to go back to fetch these tools of their trade.

Many military men accompanied the manœuvres as spectators. Amongst these was the German military attaché who spoke English perfectly. One day I timidly suggested to him that he must despise our manœuvres because they were on such a small scale compared with those of continental armies. "Not at all," he replied, "they are very good," which was, I suspect, a polite lie. Then I led him on to criticise the British army. He said: "It is excellent for fighting savages, just as ours is excellent for fighting the French."

This did not please me, for I think that when *not* led by asses our's is an army of lions that would give a good account of itself against any nation, however highly civilised.[1]

One reason why Lord Roberts ordered a chaplain to be attached to each army was that we might superintend the management of an Army Temperance Association's marquee, which was to accompany each army.

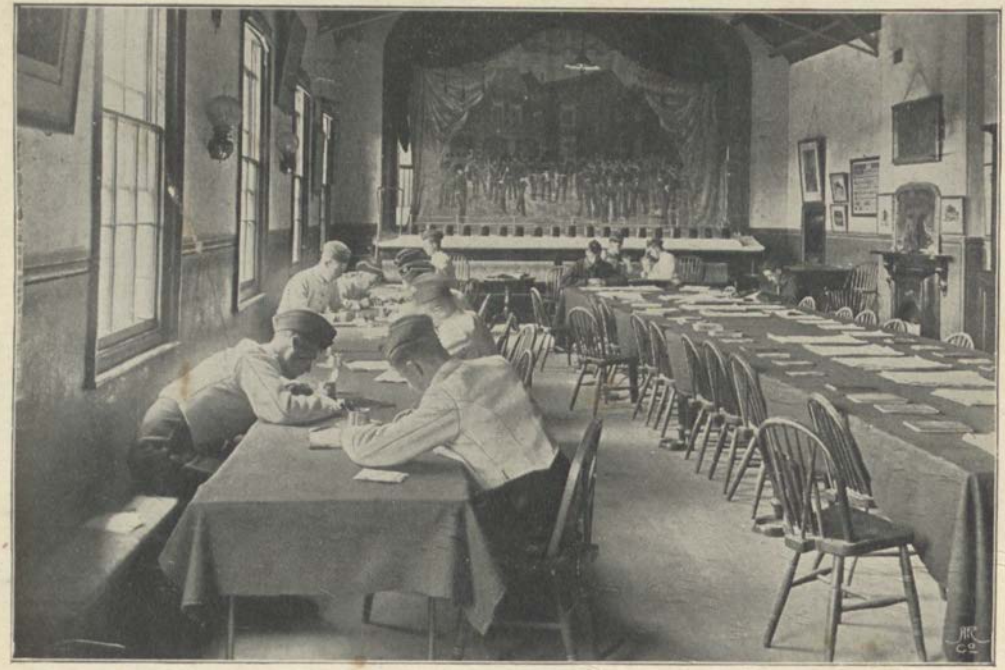
[1] Great things might be expected if Boer professors were appointed at the Staff College, or would they then lose their common-sense?

His Lordship was good enough to tell me that he was much pleased by what had been done in the matter, and he thus spoke in a speech, when presiding at a meeting of the Army Temperance Association in London :—

"With regard to the arrangements for members during the recent Irish manœuvres, I may mention that with both army corps there were temperance tents. These tents were always filled, not only by A.T.A. men, but by others as well, and great credit is due to the chaplains at both camps, who took great interest in the tents."

There is always danger of a soldier who has taken a temperance pledge breaking it in the excitement of changing from one place to another, and we try to counteract this by the A.T.A. tent, which fills, during manœuvres, the place of an A.T.A. room in barracks. There was a bar for selling cakes, tarts, temperance drinks, stationery, and many other luxuries and necessaries, and a place for the men to write letters and read newspapers. Every evening we had temperance and religious meetings, magic-lantern lectures, concerts, and other things of the kind. I used to get as many men as possible to give temperance addresses, for

when a man commits himself in this way he is not so likely to break out. They would begin by shyly announcing that the "Reverend Colonel," as they often called me, wished them to say a few words.



Photo] **Recreation Room, with Stage, Caterham.** [*Reinhold, Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

CHAPTER XI

RECREATION WORKSHOPS

WHEN I desire to know what soldiers like and dislike, I ask themselves, and a commissioned chaplain who has experience, and who does not "come the officer" over the men, has opportunities for finding out much that the authorities do not know about Thomas Atkins. Accordingly, when I read Lieut.-Colonel M'Hardy's paper on "The Soldiers' Barrack-room," which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* some years ago, I discussed it in barrack-rooms with those whom it most concerned. I quite agree with the colonel's contention that in the new barracks which are to be erected each man should have a cubicle to himself, but soldiers must learn to like and to live up to this arrangement, which is more suited to the better class of men who may be

induced to join the ranks than to the majority of those at present in them. That majority does not share Colonel M'Hardy's horror of a "double-bedded room." A few men who had been better brought up were delighted when I told them that probably in the future each soldier would have a little room to himself. Most of them, however, thought that it would be lonely. One man suggested: "How is the sergeant to see what we are doing? It's my opinion some chaps will be bringing bottles of spirits to bed with them." Another said: "If they give us each a bunk we'll be gentlemen, and then we must have people to wait upon us." Still, on reflection, they admitted that it would be nice to have a little place for themselves.

Then we spoke of other matters that should be thought of by those who will expend the money voted for the construction of barracks.

"What we really do want," one man said, "are workshops where we could practise any trade we may have, or pick up one if we have none, so that we may not leave the army handless

and unfit to earn our living." This man spoke what I have often thought myself.

Once I escorted a bishop, who had seen much of foreign armies but not much of our own, through a barracks. He was much interested in what he saw, and made many enquiries about the routine of a soldier's life. Amongst other questions he asked how much leisure time he had. I told him that a steady infantry soldier could get his work done and leave barracks at four o'clock, and that if he came off guard in the morning he had nothing to do the whole day. No doubt the proverb, "The devil tempts men, but the idle man tempts the devil," came into the bishop's head, for he replied: "I can't see how a young fellow with so much time on his hands could keep out of mischief."

Consider the life of an ordinary duty soldier, say in Malta, from the 1st of May, when the drill season ends, until the 1st of October, when it begins again. He has one parade, from six to seven o'clock in the morning, and twice a week a bathing parade—that is to say, he has to take a dip into the sea. On a

day when he is not on guard, and has no fatigues, he has nothing to do from seven or eight in the morning until six o'clock next morning. He cannot have more drill, for the sun is too hot, and even if it were not, more than a certain amount of drill does a soldier harm rather than good. During the hot weather he is not allowed to leave barracks until four or five o'clock. Nor has he much inducement to go out even if he could, for the people who would converse with him are not very desirable, and do not speak English well.

What the ordinary soldier in Malta during the summer months does with his time is this: he sleeps most of the day, which prevents him sleeping at night, besides injuring his brain and his liver, and giving him fever; or he dawdles several hours over what he calls "soldiering." "Soldiering" means putting pipeclay on his straps and cleaning up his kit generally. This would be better done if done more quickly, and so would the necessary cleaning up of rooms. Some men play football a great deal, which is better than doing nothing or drinking

in the canteen; but if a man only becomes handy with his feet (to use an Irishism) at football, he will go out of the army at the end of seven years unable to turn his hand to any useful work, in which case he will be a source of danger rather than of help, for I suppose nothing could be more dangerous than to have in a country thousands of men trained in arms but not in handicraft, with muscles rendered flabby and a distaste for work acquired by living an idle life for seven years.

The remedy for this state of things, as it seems to me, is to provide in the new barracks that are to be built workshops where the men could learn trades, or improve the little skill they had before enlisting. Why should not soldiers make their own boots and shoes? This accomplishment would be of great use to them when they became civilians and had families to clothe. Why should they not do all the work, at least in repairing barracks, that is now done by civilians? Civilians are not very ready to employ discharged soldiers, so I cannot see why the authorities should give to civilians

work in connection with the army that might be done by soldiers in their spare time.

The first objection that will be made to these workshops is that the existing system of short service scarcely allows time for a soldier to learn his proper trade of soldiering. To this we reply that working in these shops would be as voluntary as football, that it should be considered a recreation, as it is now in many high-class public schools, to be taken up before or after military drills.

Then where is the money to come from; surely not from the much-suffering canteen fund? We have suggested that the workshops should be set up when building new barracks, but even in old ones a few wooden sheds or large tents would not cost much. What the country would expend upon these would be less than what would be saved by means of them in military crime. Each trade might be like a club, and men would gladly subscribe to it. The subscriptions to the carpentering club, for instance, would go with part of the money derived from the sale of productions to pay for its work-

shop, and to buy tools and materials. And so with other clubs.

The mention of tools and materials reminds me that I have heard of something of the kind having been tried in a few regiments, and given up because the tools were spoiled and the materials wasted. Probably this was because both were Government property, the wasting of which is considered in the army almost a religious duty. This would not be the case if the trade clubs were owned, managed, and their expenses paid by the non-commissioned officers and men who were members of them. They must be got up and set going by colonels commanding, or, if these gentlemen have not time, by majors, some of whom are said not to be over-worked; but after that I would leave them in the hands of those who used them, and they would know how to protect their property. A board of officers might audit the accounts occasionally, but in other respects the less officers had to do with them the better. Soldiers are very suspicious, and if they got it into their heads that any one was making money out of their work, or that

there was any compulsion put upon them to do it, they would say that they had enough to do without going to work-shops. They should be as free to go or not to go to the shops as they are now in reference to the skittle-alley or ball-court. The workshops should be places of recreation, where those who worked would be paid for whatever work they might do, by one of the members of the club appointed by vote of the others as foreman. This foreman and a managing committee, chosen by the other members, would sell the productions, and give to each man what he would earn.

I am, of course, aware that there are at present in a regiment a master tailor, a master shoemaker, an armoury sergeant, and a pioneer sergeant, and that they have workshops and soldiers working under them. Very few men, however, are in this way employed, and the shops are as unlike as possible the recreation trade clubs here suggested. Still they would give great assistance to those who should get up the latter.

But who is to teach the members of these trade clubs; surely not Government

officials? Oh no! all they would want from Government and officialism would be to be let alone. The men would teach each other, and, of course, the club of each trade would take in the periodical literature connected with it. Suppose three or four men wanted to make something; they would get a model or pattern, and read about it in the *Engineer* or *Builder*. What one man could not understand or do the other would. There are, no doubt, many men like one who said to me: "If they taught me seven years I would not be able to make my own boots." Happily, there is no necessity for a man like this to waste seven years trying to learn. Let him continue his football, cricket, quoits, reading, or whatever pastime he may prefer.

Pimlico Clothing Establishment would certainly be a difficulty if regimental tailoring clubs undertook to make most of the men's clothing. Is it not time, however, that decentralisation should take place in reference to these matters? A more serious objection would be, that if the men could earn money at these recreation trade clubs, they might be reluctant to become non-commissioned officers. To

prevent this, it would be necessary to allow non-commissioned officers to belong to the clubs; nor does there appear to be any good reason why they should not. But if soldiers could in this way earn money, would they not spend it on drink? Of course some would; but more would be kept from drinking by the interest that work of their own choosing would impart to their lives. Many would save enough money to set themselves up in a respectable business on leaving the army.

The last objection I shall endeavour to answer is a personal one. Commanding officers who read this chapter will be too well-mannered to speak it out, but they will think it all the more. They will think—"The writer is a parson, and the presumption is a fool." This he admits, but commanding officers should suffer a fool gladly if he suggest anything that may benefit their men, and the fool in this case is only the mouthpiece of soldiers themselves.

CHAPTER XII

MR ATKINS AT PLAY

MR THOMAS ATKINS may appear more or less a machine on parade, but off duty he ceases to be a "Little Tin Soldier," and becomes very human indeed. It is a mistake to think that in peace time soldiers have nothing to do. Even civilians must know that in mounted branches and scientific corps their work is hard. And infantry men whom you see walking up and down in front of kitchen windows may, before they come out to lady-kill, have been twenty-four hours on guard, or may have attended commanding officer's parade, or engaged in some of the other "pastimes" that adjutants and sergeant-majors are ingenious in inventing. That soldier who lies basking in the sun, or who is dressed for cricket or football, may have assisted at a hard field day yesterday which necessitated much after-cleaning

of accoutrements, or he may be for a night attack this evening. How inconsiderate musketry route-marching and military training are in their demands upon Tommy's time has been shown. If occasionally he have eight hours' play, just as often he has as many hours' work, and he never gets any thing like eight shillings a day pay.

It is quite possible that more than a certain amount of drill does harm rather than good. All work and no play would never do for our soldiers; so let us follow them when the joyful command "dismiss" has been given. "Cruity," or the recruit, is a little tired, for muscles hitherto unused have been brought into play by the musical drill he has just left. And he is hungry, too, for the music which accompanied the exercises, though it made them more pleasant, did not satisfy the wolf within the growing lad. He goes then to the "dry" canteen, or coffee shop, and for a very small sum can get enough bread and butter, cake, cooked ham, etc., to make him comfortable until dinner-time.

If it be mental food that is needed, Tommy visits the library and recreation room. In the former are a good number of periodically

changed books to choose from, which he can borrow or read in a room furnished with cushioned barrack chairs, pictures, and sometimes with a mirror or two, for men—even military men—like to look in a glass as well as women. There is a long table covered with green baize, on which lie newspapers and periodicals. In the recreation game room there are bagatelle boards and, in some regiments, a billiard table, which is so popular that it has to be newly covered every month, or even fortnight.

In India always, and in most stations elsewhere, there is a temperance room where Tommies who belong to the Army Temperance Society spend some of their leisure, and in most modern barracks a shooting gallery in which a man can amuse himself and acquire professional skill with "Morris's tube."

Cards and a game called "Check," played with buttons on small squares of differently coloured cloth, are the games most often seen in barrack-rooms. Cavalry soldiers like to have a friendly "dust up" with the gloves. I attended one of these boxing competitions lately, and was amused at the solemnity and etiquette that were observed.

If out-of-door games are preferred, there are company and regimental cricket, football, and other clubs. A good player of one of these games is almost as great a man in a regiment as he is at a public school. He is excused doing duty when engaged in an important match, and otherwise indulged. There is also a fives court and a skittle-alley, though Mr Atkins' life is by no means all beer and skittles.

Often a soldier who does not play games takes a great interest in the playing of other people. An officer known to me, who was a very good cricketer, had an old soldier servant. When the master used to return from playing a match, the man would ask: "Well, how did you do to-day?" and if the cricketer could not give a good account of himself, he got a great scolding.

Bathing parades, unlike other parades, afford in the summer much amusement, at least to the swimmers. Some men, being like the Irishman who would not go into the water until he could swim, try to shirk, and these have to be forcibly immersed.

Many soldiers are proprietors of steel horses, and look very smart in their bicycle outfit. In India, and wherever ponies are

cheap, cavalry sergeants indulge in the game of polo.

Happily, without going to the canteen at all, amusements can often be got in barracks. In many regiments there is a dramatic club, and "gaffs" are got up by the members of temperance societies and others who desire to encourage harmless recreation. The best fun at these entertainments is to see Tommy acting the part of a lady; he looks so enormously tall, and gives himself such airs and mincing ways. I suppose military actors must see women of this sort, or else they would not, when personifying female characters, affect these graces.

The ladies who witness theatricals in barracks can scarcely be flattered at seeing themselves as the actors must have seen them in order to reproduce them in this way in their representations. But what "brings down the house" most of all, so to speak, is step-dancing. When good, this is sure of appreciation and applause.

Sing-songs and smoking concerts are of frequent occurrence. At these Tommy sings very comic or very sentimental songs, for he hates anything half-and-half, except, perhaps, the mixture which goes by that

name at the wet canteen. To do our warriors justice, however, a considerable number of them patronise the dry rather than the wet canteen, preferring very wisely to eat their pay rather than drink it. For those, however, who will drink, the canteen is a much safer place than the public-house outside barracks, and it is to keep soldiers from the latter that the authorities supply musical and others kinds of entertainment in the canteens.

A commanding officer thus writes :—

"At Aldershot entertainments in the canteens are common : ballet girls of a certain age, with much tinsel on their skirts, dance hornpipes and smile frigidly; comic men with serious faces give the latest music-hall songs ; conjurers, thought readers, animal magnetists, clairvoyants—I have seen them all in my own canteen, and have watched with pleasure the room crowded with my soldiers, to be followed with a 'guard report' furnished blank next morning."

It is a vexed question, however, whether entertainments supplied by the canteens are beneficial or the reverse. They are encouraged by the authorities, who hope that they may have the effect of keeping soldiers out of the public-houses that surround almost all barracks. On the other hand, they are

thought by many to do harm by leading recruits to suppose that to frequent the canteen is the right thing to do, and that the total abstinence principles which they may have learned as civilians are unrecognised and impracticable in the army.

Tommy Atkins goes all over the world, so his recreations vary according to the place and climate he is in. In warm countries, when the heat is too great to go out of doors during the day, he learns to be very expert with a needle, making quilts of innumerable squares of cloth, working fancy belts, and embroidering pictures of the colours and other things belonging to his regiment. Many of us admired the specimens of fret-work and carving at the London Military Exhibition some years ago. In India private soldiers become sportsmen, and go out to shoot big and little game in as lordly a manner as the millionaire who has hired a Scotch moor.

How does Tommy Atkins amuse himself out of barracks at home? Chiefly in walking up and down the streets with the unselfish object of giving the girls a treat. To do this last he dresses up smartly, arranges a little curl of hair on each side of his temples,

and sets his cap at what his chums in the barrack-room, who take a friendly interest in his toilette, consider the proper angle. Then he takes his "walking-out" stick and sallies forth to see and be seen. I may mention here that nearly every foreign officer to whom I have spoken about our army has asked: "Why do English soldiers carry canes in their hands?" To this I am always tempted to answer: "To prevent their putting their hands in their pockets, and being as round-shouldered as some of your men."

Before long Thomas Atkins finds a Mary Jane to accompany him in his walks, and sometimes the pair marry. The authorities try to prevent more than the regulation number of soldiers marrying, but human nature is stronger than the authorities, and Tommy marries as recklessly as a Curate. We ought, however, before blaming him, to consider his opportunities. Too often we hear of soldiers in uniform being insulted by being refused admission into public resorts. There are places, however, where this is anything but the case. More than one of the East End public dancing-halls give notice that "the shilling charged for entrance does not apply to soldiers

in uniform, who will be admitted free on personal application to the proprietor." One of these proprietors was lately interviewed, and asked why the presence of Tommy Atkins was so much desired. He answered: "You see, if we can attract in a good proportion of affable military men, we secure a greater number of lady visitors. You know the attraction there is for the female heart in a scarlet coat. And plenty of pretty girls frequenting a dancing-hall is what brings in the class that pays. I need scarcely say that our soldier patrons do not themselves spend much, for obvious reasons; but if they are nice fellows, who take plenty of partners, and do not mind plucking a wallflower now and then, I take care to make them welcome by offering them plenty of refreshment at the expense of 'the house.'"

Even when he is on duty there are girls for whom "giddy" is a mild epithet, who will not leave Mr Atkins alone. Witness the following experience recorded by a soldier:—

"I found 'sentry-go' very irksome at first, but there were pleasant variations. Once, when on duty in place of the Guards in London, I was anticipating the pleasures of being relieved, when I was startled by a tapping on my helmet. I looked about to see what it could be,

and something bobbed lightly against my nose. I immediately grasped it, and found it was a small packet dangling from a black thread. I looked up, and at the top window I saw some girls' heads, and heard giggling. I quickly detached the tiny parcel, and my relief coming up directly, I was marched off to quarters, where I hurriedly opened the package. It was marked outside, "Smokeless Powder for our Sentry," and inside the box was a seidlitz powder! I showed the box to my chums, and we set to work to make a model sentry-box with a door. We caught a spider and put it inside, with a slip of paper and the lines—

> 'There came a big spider
> And sat down beside her
> And frightened the darling away.'

The next time I was on sentry at that post there was the same sort of bobbing on my helmet. I took off the little parcel and put in its place the model sentry-box, which was immediately pulled up. The parcel this time contained some brandy balls, and the question, 'What's the good of powder without shot?'"

Though the temptations of soldiers are so great and so many, a large number of them do not yield to them. Some of these find recreation in attending Temperance, Oddfellows, and similar societies, or in improving themselves at technical schools, free libraries, and other profitable places.

But Tommy has pets to play with which are less dangerous than are some women. I

remember a little dog the Berkshire regiment had, which was in Maiwand and other hard battles, with them in Afghanistan. Her Majesty the Queen decorated it with medals, but it came to the inglorious end of being run over by a bread-cart.

A young tiger called Plassey came with a regiment to Dover, where suitable quarters were provided for him in the main *fosse* of the citadel, beneath the officers' mess. There Plassey lived a happy life with his friend, a dog, his "personal attendant" being the adjutant's groom, who fed and looked after him. At meal-time Plassey always allowed the dog to have the first "go-in"; but when he thought his companion had taken a fair share, he would give him a gentle pat with his paw as a reminder. When Plassey was nearly full-grown, and in the zenith of his popularity, an old lady wrote to the general commanding the district, and stated that she had "seen Plassey arrive," and that ever since she had remained a prisoner in her house, fearing to go out lest he should have escaped and be roaming about the town! So frequent were this old lady's letters and complaints, that at last the general felt compelled to take notice of them,

and so poor Plassey was sent off to the Zoological Gardens, accompanied in his exile by his faithful dog.

A friend of mine in the Gloucester regiment had a bear, which was on terms of great intimacy with all the men, and a very comical creature it was.

CHAPTER XIII

REGIMENTAL SPORTS

On one day in the year almost every regiment, no matter in what part of the world it is stationed, has a meeting for athletic sports. Even on active service time and occasion for these sports are sometimes found,[1] and then they are especially useful, keeping cheerful and contented those who endure many hardships. The day of the sports is as far as possible a holiday for the men, and to the officers an occasion for being "at home" to their friends.

Sports — especially those in which members of different regiments and corps compete with each other—serve to keep alive *esprit de corps*, that great incentive to

[1] After one of the battles in South Africa, our soldiers had races with horses taken from the Boers. They also raced and backed favourite scorpions.

duty. They improve, too, the tempers and dispositions of the competitors, by forcing them to restrain ungenerous feelings and to respect each other. So it is not only a pleasure, but almost a duty, for a chaplain to the forces to be present at these sports, and to show real interest and sympathy with them.

The events that generally excite most interest are the obstacle race and the tugs-of-war. To the former each regiment tries to add some new and original obstacle. At the last I saw run the obstacles that had to be surmounted were as follows — I quote from the programme :—

"Through barrels with the ends knocked out, through about six rows of nets, over a hurdle, under a net pegged down rather tightly over a commissariat waggon, along the top of a stretched net with very wide mesh, the feet not being allowed to touch the ground, over a second waggon, under a windsail, under, over, and again, under masts laid close and very near to each other, and finishing with a run home."

At another race the runners had to make their way through labyrinths of

netting, to pull themselves up by ropes, to get over a high wooden arch, and run up greased planks.

I shall not speak of racing, jumping, putting shot, and other competitions which may be seen at all sports, but of some that are more or less peculiar to, or at least characteristic of, military sports. The annual military performances at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, have made the public familiar with the names of such exercises as swordsman *v.* swordsman, mounted; swordsman *v.* lancer, mounted; swordsman mounted *v.* man with bayonet dismounted; lancer mounted *v.* man with bayonet dismounted; sabre *v.* bayonet, dismounted; bayonet *v.* bayonet. The bodies of the men are protected with thick leather coverings, and their faces with wire masks. The points of their weapons have knobs upon them, which prevent them from doing harm. Most of the horses seem to understand well what is being done, and enter into the spirit of the contest, though a few of them are nervous of knocks, and it is difficult for the riders to keep them from backing away from their enemies.

At the last garrison sports at my last station we had all these competitions, as well as tent-pegging, lemon-cutting, cleaving the Turk's head, and taking rings off with the point of the sword. They were done at full gallop, and all deservedly applauded. An officer cut in half three lemons one after another. The lemons were each suspended in the air from a sort of wooden arms. By tent-pegging is meant trying to take up when galloping, with the point of a lance, a tent-peg loosely fastened into the ground. The artillery driving is popular with the spectators. It requires no little skill to drive six or eight horses at a trot, and gallop between posts so placed that the slightest error knocks them down. At our garrison sports the driving of the officers of one gun was very good, not one post being touched. It must have had a good effect upon the men to see that officers could beat them at their own work—could not only command, but show how their orders ought to be carried out. This year, for the first time, I saw a gun-wheel race. It was run by men of the field artillery. They ran each rolling along the ground a

wheel detached from a gun, which in this way would be rendered useless to the enemy.

In the egg-and-spoon race each competitor holds in his hand, at arm's length, a spoon containing an egg, and the man wins who gets first to the goal without breaking the egg. Another laughter-provoking competition to be seen at all military sports is the bucket race. The runners carry each a bucket of water on his head or shoulder, and the prize is given to the one who comes in first and brings the fullest bucket. Anything but "sweetest sounds of purest harmony" are made by the instruments in the bandsmen's race, for each bandsman has to play an instrument when he is running. The pipe race, which is next to be mentioned, has no connection with musical instruments. What is meant are tobacco-pipes, which, during the race, are filled and lighted by the runners. They must finish the race, which is a quarter of a mile long, with the pipes still alight. No fuzees are allowed.

At almost all regimental sports there is a marching-order competition. Prizes are awarded to the three soldiers who turn out best dressed, and with the cleanest

accoutrements. The competitors have to lay down their kit to be inspected, so that each article may be seen to be in its proper place, and all as neat as they should be.

If this competition encourages the men to be clean and neat, the next to be mentioned makes them smart and able to jump out of bed at a moment's notice. It is called a hammock race. The competitors lay down in hammocks, covered themselves with blankets, and pretended to be asleep. When the starter's pistol fired they turned out, lashed up their hammocks with the blankets inside, put on their coats, and then, throwing the hammocks over their shoulders, or catching them up under their arms, ran with them three hundred yards. The man who came in first, and had the most neatly lashed up hammock, received one pound fifteen shillings; the second prize was ten shillings. I saw this competition at the admirably arranged sports of the Royal Marines at Gosport. No wonder that the men of this corps can go everywhere and do everything, for, in addition to their training as soldiers, the Marines have to learn to

do the work of blue-jackets. This is why they had a hammock race.

Other competitions which are frequently to be seen, are a three-legged race, a wheel-barrow race, a jockey race, a bell race, and a frog race. The first is run by two men abreast, each of the Siamese twins having his near leg tied to the near leg of the other. In the second, each runner holds up the feet of a soldier who makes his hands act as the wheel of the barrow. In the jockey race, which is for a hundred yards, soldiers run with drummer-boys on their backs. The competitors in the bell race are blindfolded, and he wins who first catches the man with the bell. The frog race is run by the boys of the regiment on all-fours.

The boot race was thus described in the programme—"Boots to be taken off at starting-post, placed in a heap, fifty yards off, race to heap, competitors to pick out their own boots, and the first to return to starter with boots fully laced-up to win." Severe as is this trial of fleetness of foot, quickness of eye, dexterity of hand, and a nice discrimination in boots, it is made yet more arduous by the exertions

of the stewards, who mix the boots of the competitors with all the care of a croupier shuffling a pack of cards.

The bun and treacle race can so easily be imagined that we need not describe it.

In the cricket race the run was eight times between wickets.

Of course there is always a sack race, and nearly always a miller and a sweep trying to prove by force of mops that black *may* become white.

The officers do all in their power to make the sports go off well. They generally have a donkey race, and ride in costumes representing savage and civilised people—costermongers, policemen, sweeps, strong-minded women, and so forth.

Another race which the officers sometimes get up to amuse the spectators is the menagerie race. A considerable number of the pets in the barracks are made to run, handicapped according to their size and kind, so as to be tolerably fairly matched. Among other creatures in the last race of the kind which I saw were a cock, a goose, a squirrel, kids, cats, dogs, rabbits. A string is attached to each animal, which is held by the officer who runs it.

In the intervals of the different events the soldiers who form a ring outside the ropes make themselves merry. From time to time they send up paper balloons representing cows, donkeys, night-shirts, and other things that will raise a laugh. Some blacken their faces and perform as nigger minstrels, getting in this way a good deal of money from the visitors. Others dress up as old women and sing comic songs. At the last sports I saw there was a real Aunt Sally, who sat in a barrel, and popped her head up from time to time, to encourage people to have "two shots a penny" at her with short sticks. One or two drummer-boys are always very anxious to give a "shine" to the boots of ladies and gentlemen in the *rôle* of shoeblacks, which they assume for the day. Scotch reels, Irish jigs, sailors' hornpipes, and sword-dances are performed, and, indeed, there is nothing wanting to amuse the spectators, who generally go away, much pleased with their visit to military sports. The last thing done is the distribution of the prizes, which are of money, and are given to the successful competitors by the wife of the general or colonel.

CHAPTER XIV

MR ATKINS IN TROUBLE

CRIME in the army has not the same meaning as crime in civilian life. It is true that if a man have a good character before he enlists, he will generally be able to keep out of trouble as a soldier, but, on the other hand, many men find themselves in military prisons for breaking out of barracks, losing their kit, desertion, fraudulent enlistment, making a false statement on attestation, insubordination, neglect of duty, sleeping on sentry, and other military crimes which civilians could not commit. "Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" is a charge which may include anything and everything.

Again, if a soldier is convicted of theft, or is guilty of any kind of disgraceful conduct for which a civilian would be incarcerated, he is sent, not to a military, but to a civil

prison. For these reasons, though the word imprisonment may sound as badly in military as in civilian life, the same stigma does not rightly belong to it.

It would be tedious if I were to attempt to enumerate the differences between a military and a civil prison, or to describe the routine of the former. Instead of doing so, I shall jot down an epitome of some conversations I have had with soldiers in trouble.

One of the rules laid down for the guidance of chaplains to military prisons reads as follows :—

"He shall endeavour by all means in his power, and particularly by encouraging their confidence, to obtain an intimate knowledge of the character and disposition of all prisoners."

To enable him to carry out this rule, the chaplain sees each man on admission and discharge, and at other times when he thinks it expedient.

If one can steer between the extremes of credulity and scepticism, one may learn a good deal about human nature by conversing with prisoners.

A lady who was allowed for a short time

by the general officer commanding the station to visit the prison of which I am thinking, had much enthusiasm, but not enough knowledge of men and of the world for her self-imposed task. It was awful the way the worst characters used to cant and lie to her. A warder told me that on one occasion, when he heard one of the greatest ruffians "doing the lamb to the poor innocent lady," he could with difficulty keep from knocking him down. On the other hand, it is a mistake to doubt every word a man says merely because he wears a prison garb.

Old soldiers are now becoming rare, but in the days before short service they used to develop a great deal of cunning. I once said to one of them who came to the punishment cells of a certain garrison abroad very often, that I hoped never again to see him there, and that it would be much better for himself if I did not. He said that he could not agree with me, for he did not think it well for a soldier to be altogether without crime. "What do you mean?" I asked. "Well, sir, it's this way. If a man is never made a prisoner and brought to the orderly-room, his commanding officer forgets all about him; but if he commits a few crimes,

and then pulls himself together, the colonel will say: 'So-and-so has been giving no trouble lately; we must do something for him;' so they look out for a soft billet and give it to him."

This is an advertising age, and people now adopt curious ways of preventing themselves from being ignored, but this was the first time I had heard the advertising advantages of crime.

There was an honesty in the confessions of some of these prisoners that quite disarmed me.

I remember asking a soldier who was sent to the prison after the Egyptian Campaign of 1882 for striking a non-commissioned officer on active service, how it was he came to commit such a serious crime.

"We were expecting," he said, "to be attacked by the Arabs next day, and as I had been in one engagement and did not like it, I determined to do something that would get me out of another, so I struck the sergeant, knowing that I would be made a prisoner."

I could not help looking astonished at this cool confession of cowardice, and saying that I hoped that he was a unique specimen of a

British soldier. Thereupon the man, who was considerably above the average in intelligence and education, said:

"Excuse me, sir, but there is no use in your talking to me. I know all you could say about England expecting every man to do his duty, that I was a coward for not doing mine, and all that kind of thing. I admit that I am a coward, but I can't help it. A battle is not to my taste, and whenever my turn comes I shall try by some means or another to get out of it."

"Then why did you become a soldier?" I asked, and was answered in only one, but that a very expressive word, "Starvation."

But all prisoners are not as communicative as these. There is a class of humanity technically called "criminal lunatics." They live on the borderland between crime and insanity. Many of them find their way into the army, and give not a little trouble. Before they have got through their recruits' drill they either desert or their tempers get them into a military prison. To this they do not much object, for they get off guards and the soldiering which they hate. Of course, the terrible cleanliness and enforced total abstinence from beer and 'baccy are

drawbacks, but still they boast that they can do their imprisonment "on their heads."

One of these gentlemen was meditating in his cell, and a warder who related the circumstance to me asked him what he was thinking about.

"Well," he said, "I'm leaving this place next week, and they'll be giving me my ticket also from the army, and I'm wondering when I shall get as good a billet again."

The first thing these men do on coming to prison is to try and humbug the doctor so that they may get little to do and plenty of food to enable them to do it. Some are good at feigning one kind of malady, others make a speciality of another, but most of them, at one time or another, have pretended to be "off the chump," or mad.

Considering that we are all more or less mad, it is not easy for a doctor to make certain by one or two inspections whether a man has or has not an abnormal degree of insanity. I knew a case where nine medical officers said that a military prisoner was shamming madness, and he proved, or seemed to prove, that they were wrong, by hanging himself in his cell. To help him in his decision, the prison doctor used to ask me

to talk to the men under observation, and tell him whether I thought they were really insane or only pretending. One man, however, would not talk to any one. Whenever I or any other official came into his cell he would lie down on the floor and pretend to be either altogether deaf or altogether dumb.

At last, some observation I made caused him in an unguarded moment to give just the least suspicion of a smile in the corner of his mouth. Seeing this, I knelt down and gave him a good tickling, and said:

"Now that I have seen you smile, you may as well laugh and speak." On my promising to ask the governor not to punish him, he gave in, and found the use of his tongue.

When writing my name one morning in the Visitors' Book at the entrance door of the prison, I was much startled by hearing behind me a great thud on the stone floor. This was a prisoner who had leaped down from the top gallery, more than thirty feet high. Of course, a crowd of warders got round him, and he succeeded in making the fuss he had intended. He meant to frighten the parson, so I pretended to look upon the matter as a common occurrence, and re-

marked aloud that I was glad to see he was not hurt.

This was done, no doubt, partly to relieve the monotony of imprisonment, and partly to attract to himself importance and give trouble by pretending that he was going to commit suicide. The man told me afterwards that he had been a sailor, and knew how to fall upon his feet without hurting himself.

I heard of a colonel sending to a soldier who threatened to destroy himself, a razor, with the message that he had no objection to his using it. Probably this never really happened; but, nine times out of ten, to send such a message would be the most philosophical and even kindest thing to do; for it would more than anything else deter a man from ever attempting to kill himself or even from saying that he would do so. It is a mistake, when some one tells you that he is going to commit suicide, to appear shocked and alarmed, and to implore him not to do anything so terrible. Rather talk the matter over in a cold-blooded, business-like way, and take away all romance by going into minute details as to the best way of doing it. Tell the man that if he kills himself he will prove that he

is a coward, for it really requires more courage to live than to die, and the loss of another coward, you may add, will not be a great one to the world.

That this is the best kind of treatment I learned from experience and also from the action of a celebrated surgeon. A young man with a bilious temperament, who had been reading melancholy poetry, came to him and said that all life was hollow and unsatisfying, and that he thought of taking his own away. "Well," said the surgeon, "perhaps after all it is the best thing you can do; but as I wouldn't have you botch it, or do it in a slovenly manner, I shall give you a few hints about cutting your throat." He then entered upon a disgustingly minute dissertation about veins and arteries, and the advisability of not cutting one when the other was meant, until the young man's face became ashy pale. At this point the surgeon said, "Let me look at your finger," and in an instant made a cut across it with a lancet which he had secreted in his sleeve; the young man was much frightened, and the surgeon said, "Go away, and never think of cutting your throat when you have not the courage even to cut your finger."

The less fuss and publicity made about suicides the better, for they are of an epidemic nature, and when weak people hear of them they are tempted to imitate them. In one regiment that was under my spiritual charge the master-tailor committed suicide. His successor and his successor's wife did the same. Then a soldier who became an acting master-tailor followed the miserable example. In summer, at Malta, where the last man shot himself, people are buried the day they die or certainly the day following. I remember having to wait in my quarters until the coroner's jury had given their verdict, to see whether or not the man was to be "buried by Christianity," as the soldiers expressed it. If the verdict had not been "temporarily insane," there would have been no military funeral. This is a good rule, for people ought to be taught that it is a cowardly and disgraceful act to leave the post assigned by the Creator, however disagreeable it may have become. The real motive of this last suicide I never found out. Some said that the man had falsified the tailoring accounts, and was afraid of being found out. One of his

chums—and considering his bad influence he had far too many—told me that on the morning of the sad event he had drunk a whole bottle of whisky, which looks as if in this, as in most cases of the kind, drink were the cause.

This reminds me of a sapper in the Royal Engineers who, when I was in Bermuda, died from the effects of a quart of the rum called "fixed bayonets," which the people sell there. The man was a Roman Catholic, and the priest refused to bury him, on the ground that he had virtually committed suicide. As some officers were talking about this refusal in the anteroom of one of the messes, my Church of England brother chaplain happened to come in. "Mr ——, would you bury the man?" they asked. My colleague, who was impulsive and generous, blurted out: "Oh! I would bury them all."

I must have a very bad character, for I know all the dodges for picking oakum quickly, as bad characters do by constant practice. Many interesting life histories have been told to me as I showed new hands how they could get through tasks of oakum that seemed hopelessly formidable.

These were occasions when I got to know the men, and discovered that not seldom beneath a prison jacket beats a heart warm with domestic feeling, and, whatever may have been the case before trouble came, at least afterwards not deaf to the call of religion. In fact, I came in my own mind to divide mankind very much into two classes, the caught and the uncaught, or actual and potential criminals, and to consider that those inside prison were more unfortunate and less cunning, but not much worse morally, than those outside. Some of my imprisoned flock were so penitent and so anxious to do better in the future, that when I compared them with myself and others living in triumphant respectable wickedness, I was inclined to stand hat in hand before them in an attitude of respect and reverence.

One was cheered too and humbled, knowing how little it was deserved, by receiving letters from some after leaving the prison, thanking for what had been done for them, and promising to follow the advice given. One man, for whom I obtained a passage to America from the Prisoners' Aid Society, wrote to say that he was getting large wages —more than the chief warder of the prison

he had left—and was very comfortable, the only thing he had to complain of being the badness of the pavement of the streets, and the disagreeableness of the elevated railways in New York through which he had passed on his way to the far West.

Flogging has now been abolished in the army, except in extreme cases during active service on board ship, and in prison, when the greatest number of lashes that can be given is twenty-five. Nor is it easy to see how discipline could be maintained amongst military prisoners if the cat were not in the background as a last resource. One Sunday when going to the prison chapel, I heard proceeding from one of the cells snatches of filthy songs mixed with horrible oaths. After smashing everything within reach, it occurred to the occupant of this cell that it would be a clever thing to make a disturbance on a Sunday morning when everything ought to be particularly quiet and orderly. This nuisance he carried on with little or no intermission until he was sentenced on Monday morning to receive twenty-five lashes by a board of visitors hastily summoned. If this had not been done, discipline would have been mocked at by the other

prisoners. On Monday morning I was struck by the particularly solemn official air of the governor, doctor, and all the warders. It was in honour of the happily very rare event, even in prisons—a flogging.

I would not have introduced this disagreeable subject if it were not that I wished to mention the case of a man who was willing to get rid of his bad temper even at the cost of suffering. In a rage he had threatened to strike a warder and had insulted the governor. As he was a young soldier the latter wished to deal with him himself, and not bring him before the visitors, who would have ordered him to be flogged for so serious an offence. Discipline, however, had to be maintained, and as long as the man was obstinate and refused to conform to it, the governor could not spare him. He sent for me and said, "I don't want to get No. —— a flogging, but it must come to that unless he caves in and tells me that he is sorry for what has taken place. Perhaps you would go to him and ask him—it will come better from you than from me—not to make a fool of himself and bring the cat down on his back." I talked to the man for about an hour in his cell, when at last he said: "The

truth is, sir, I have the very devil of a temper; it has brought me into scrapes all through my life, and I don't think there is anything for it but a flogging. It's what my father and mother should have given me, and now I am determined to have my due."[1] And he did have it, and said afterwards that he thought it might do him good. With this compare the case of a man who told me that he committed his crime in order to get into prison, for "there alone I am not drunk."

Among some French literary men the question was asked one day, "If you had to spend years on a desert island, and were allowed to bring with you only one book, what one would you choose?" Though some of them were by no means religious men, they all agreed that the Bible, being the most varied book, being indeed a library rather than a book, would be the best to bring. In the first stage of their imprisonment, Church of England military prisoners have only the Bible and Prayer Book in their cells. Men beginning

[1] At the time when flogging was in fashion a man asked the captain of his company to get one for him, because he was the only one in the company who had escaped chastisement, and he could not stand the chaff of his chums.

to read the former from pure *ennui* have read it through to the end, and told me, with all the pride of discoverers, that they found it to be "full of good stories, and altogether most interesting." It sounded strange to hear the old book spoken of in terms used by literary tasters to describe some fashionable work just published by Murray or Macmillan.

Libraries are supplied by Government to military prisons, and every Saturday those prisoners who have got out of the lowest class can have the loan of a book. The authorised catalogue from which these books were chosen, up till lately, was compiled on the principle of giving people what they ought to read, rather than what they would read. It might have been a good thing if military prisoners would have read the serious discourses and abstruse theological works that were on the old list, but this they would not do. The present chaplain-general, who kindly consulted me when doing so, made out a new official list, which is a boon indeed, for mere goody-goody books, and those above the men's heads, are excluded from it. From this list we soon got a supply,

and the books were put under the care of the warder who was the "chaplain's clerk." One day I asked him how the prisoners liked the new books. "Do you think, sir," was his reply, "that I would lend such beautiful interesting works to those fellows?" "Certainly," I said, "they were got for them, and I meant you to give them out every Saturday." At this he groaned and said, "Oh, sir, they'll wear them out, and I wanted to keep them nice and new-looking to show whenever the visitors came round. The old books the men never would look at, but as for those bound volumes of magazines, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' 'Through the Ranks to a Commission,' and the new lot generally, they are mad to get at them, and will wear them out reading them so often."

This warder was kind, though firm, in his treatment of the prisoners, and his keen observations helped me much when studying their characters. He once told me the following, which will interest members of The Charity Organisation Society:—One day a prisoner asked him to bring him before the Governor. "What for?" asked my friend the warder. "I

am," he said, "going to leave the prison with my ticket—discharge from the army —and the warrant they will give me will be to the place where I enlisted; I want the Governor to get one for me to London instead, for I believe that the Lord Mayor is giving out lots of money in the East End, and I may as well go and get my share." We never could tell how, in a prison where the silent system was strictly maintained, the man discovered that the Lord Mayor had raised a fund for the unemployed in East London. I wonder how much this man, who was only unemployed because his character was too bad for the army, got out of the Lord Mayor.

The dress worn by military prisoners is not quite so frightful as that of those in civilian jails. It is made of dark grey or brown frieze with red facings. In obedience to a recent regulation, the hair of imprisoned soldiers is not cropped as heretofore. I like to see a man take some "pride in himself," so am pleased when I see their heads well brushed and oiled, or, rather, greased (where the grease comes from is a mystery), the hair parted in the

middle, and the customary little curl arranged on either side of the brow.

The first Sunday I took a service in the chapel of one of the largest of our military prisons, I was much surprised at the hearty way in which the prisoners answered the responses. They were not afraid to speak or sing out as are so many other congregations. Congratulating the governor after service upon having such religious men under his charge, he took away all illusion with a word of explanation. He told me that the men, being on the silent system, were only allowed to use their tongues in church, and that to do so was a great relief to them.

Certainly in no place were my sermons more attentively listened to than in that prison chapel, especially if allusion happened to be made to any event going on in the outer world.

I used to speak a good deal to the men individually before the first Sunday of each month, and the three great festivals when the Holy Communion was celebrated. I must say that I looked forward to these celebrations with a feeling almost of dread, for knowing that the worst characters were

generally the most willing to communicate, I could not but suspect that many of them were thus desirous merely from curiosity, or to relieve the monotony of their cells, or even for lower reasons. Sometimes worse than fools rush in where angels fear to tread. To prevent those coming forward who had never considered "the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof," I had, as they say in Scotland, "to fence the table." After prayers every morning during the previous week, I used to read to them from the Gospels the account of the institution, and the exhortations in the Communion Service. After some simple explanation and warning of my own, I said that all who wished to communicate were to give in their names, so that I might speak to each one individually. At this private interview, to my question why they wished to communicate, I generally received some such answer as this: "Well, sir, I thought it could do me no harm and might do me some good," which was a charm theory that had to be energetically combated.

When on one occasion the Bishop came

to hold a confirmation in the prison, it was with difficulty that I prevented the inmates from all becoming confirmed scoundrels.

Prisoners know that it is the chaplain's duty to submit to the governor the names of those who, in his opinion, should be recommended for partial remission of punishment; and what flood-gates of hypocrisy does this knowledge not open! Scoundrels will cant about their "experiences" till one wonders that they do not fall dead for their hypocrisy, and then suggest that "the chaplain has much influence, and can——" Here Mr Facing-two-ways should be stopped, and told that he can show the power of religion by taking his imprisonment patiently; and that, to a man so full of Christian joy as he is, "Stone walls do not a prison make," &c.

Occasionally, however, the chaplain meets men who are sincerely glad that they have been brought to prison, since the opportunity thus afforded them for thinking has taught them both that they are sinners, and that they need not always remain such. Of course, there are many whose penitence is nothing better than regret that they were

caught and punished. There are, however, many who would, I am convinced, prefer to be punished if innocent, rather than be bad and escape punishment altogether. To many, the silent hours of captivity have brought back their mother's prayers for them, and the memory, perhaps, of the peace and rest they themselves once found under a Saviour's easy yoke and light burden.

Nothing can be more false than to say that people are more afraid of punishment than of sin. I believe that suffering punishment is a positive relief to the conscious sinner. A short time ago a prisoner surrendered himself for a military crime of which he would most probably never have been convicted. He had enlisted in another corps, and was being promoted to be a non-commissioned officer; but he gave himself up, for, as he said, "he did not like being thought to have a better character than he had."

We all know that religion seldom visits our churches; but it is, I know, present with many who, on each Sunday, sing of their sins and of a Saviour's love, *not* in a surpliced choir, but in a prison garb of shame

—of shame that makes people no longer ashamed of Jesus.

I never could hear unmoved my one hundred and twenty jail-birds singing in reference to their Saviour—

> "Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life;
> Grant us that Way to know,
> That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
> Whose joys eternal flow."

I have heard much of the proceedings of the courts-martial which supply military prisons with inmates; but all I know from personal experience is what I learned when summoned on one occasion to give evidence. The prisoners and witnesses are often unconscious humorists.

For the benefit of civilian readers we give the following anecdote.

As in an ordinary trial a prisoner may object to the presence of a juryman whom he thinks has already some prejudice or grudge against him, so at a court-martial he is always asked if he is satisfied with the officers selected to try him. One Tommy, when the president asked him the question, looked at the officers sitting solemnly before him, and answered, "In course I do; I

object to the 'ole blooming lot of yer." It is said that they were so astonished at this reply that they put off the trial till they could make out what was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

CHAPTER XV

IN A MILITARY HOSPITAL

In the last chapter we spoke of Mr Atkins in trouble, meaning by "trouble" the punishment that is inflicted upon him in cells and military prisons. In this chapter we shall give an account of Tommy in "Dock," as he calls a military hospital.

Nor are the two institutions of garrison cells and garrison hospital unconnected in the minds of soldiers. A worthless character, if he is not in one of them is sure to be in the other. He schemes into hospital when little or nothing is wrong with him to get off a route-march, a field-day, coal-carrying, or some other duty which he does not like, or if he be really ill it is pretty sure to be because he has given rein to the devices and desires of his evil nature.

When I was at Bermuda, twenty years ago,

Photo] [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane*

GUARDS' HOSPITAL, Rochester Row.

soldiers were employed on the engineers' works five days of the week, getting a shilling a day for their labour. Saturday was reserved for parades, and there was no shilling. One Saturday I went to the station hospital and found it almost full, which surprised me, as on the five previous days there had been scarcely any patients in it. This sudden outbreak of sickness, however, was soon explained by a man who said to me, "Oh! sir, it is only the Saturday sickness."

They went sick, it appeared, on Saturday to get off parade, and because there was no working pay to be earned.

This fact, that it is not uncommon for men to "sham the doctor," and get into hospitals when they are quite well, causes good characters to rather pride themselves upon not going into them. They first try to doctor themselves, and many a poor fellow has got his death because he would not go to hospital before the fever, or whatever else was hanging over him, had taken such a hold that it could not be shaken off.

Of course, besides the dread of being considered a "skrimshanker," a soldier dislikes the necessary restraints of a hospital. He

misses his beer, and thinks that "milk diet" is but a poor substitute. He can only smoke, when confined to a ward, by special permission, or on the sly.

We would mention the disagreeable medicines he has to take as another reason why Tommy generally dislikes being in hospital, had we not often seen him gulping them down quite contentedly, and almost with a relish. Indeed, a medical officer once told me that soldiers think themselves neglected if not ordered plenty of medicine, "and accordingly," he added, "we give it them, though well knowing that most of it does them no good."

Another medical officer related to me the following incident: A man, whose leg had been amputated, was recovering from the effects of chloroform, and my friend overheard him thus soliloquizing:—

"Well, in all my life I never had such a cheap drunk!"

After this the taxpayers cannot say that their soldiers do not appreciate the medicines bought for them.

Either because he was not so well satisfied with the remedies given to him or for some other reason, I once knew

a soldier who deserted from a hospital in the blue flannel clothes provided for patients. When he had told me that he had unfastened a bar of a back window in a small ward where he was alone, clambered out of it and over the wall, I asked—

"But what did you do for clothes to replace the hospital kit?"

"Oh," he said, "I stripped a scarecrow in a potato field, and gave it my blue things in exchange."

Then he went on to say that he earned a precarious living in the streets by singing two hymns which he had picked up at the parade services. After a few months he gave himself up, being in great want of clothes, and finding that his hymn-singing did not bring in more than tenpence or a shilling a day.

Every day the hospital of a station is visited by a field officer who asks in each ward if there are any complaints. He means in reference to food and such matters. Not understanding this, a recruit once answered, "Yessir—rheumatism in both arms."

When a soldier is really sick, no trouble

nor expense is spared to make him better. I knew at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, one soldier who had been confined to bed for three years with chronic rheumatism, during which time he could not move a single member of his body. He used to tell me that he wished the doctors would let him die. He knew as well as any of us that he was kept alive only by the large amount of nourishment that was given to him in the day. The men in the ward seemed to vie with each other who should be kindest to him. To one of them he left by will all the pay that had accumulated during his illness.

There is not so much care taken to avoid inflicting mental pain. A man when assigned a bed, will be told with glee that "The last bloke wot 'ad that cot pegged out!" The band-room was nearly next door to a hospital at Bermuda. When it was known that a man would not last long, "The Dead March in Saul" for his funeral used to be practised. This naturally depressed the dying man, and I had to get the custom discontinued.

A military hospital is, of course, kept

beautifully clean; but when compared to a civilian one it looks rather bare. In the larger hospitals, however, where there are military nursing sisters, flowers in the wards, and other little touches of refinement mark their presence.

Soldiers who have lived in India know how to pass away the time in hospital much better than those who have not. They knit socks, work pictures of their regimental colours in worsted, or practise some of the other accomplishments which they learn when shut up in barrack-rooms during the hot season.

It is in military hospitals that the horrors of war may be best estimated. In them, men continue to suffer from wounds and diseases acquired in a campaign, of which the excitement is long past, and about which the newspapers have ceased to write and the public to be interested. Ruins of men came back to Netley Hospital when I was there; but the public knew little about them, as they did not happen to lose their health in a sensational campaign.

Those who have seen the patience and resignation of wounded English soldiers,

and their kindness to each other, must greatly respect them. Kindness to each other, I say, and I might add kindness to their wounded enemies lying near them.

The following is an extract from a letter of a military nursing sister who was stationed at Ladysmith in the present Boer war:—

"We have several wounded Boer patients, and it is really amusing to see our large-hearted Tommy Atkins fraternising with the enemy. A touching little scene happened yesterday. One of the Gordons had his arm amputated. A Boer in the next bed had his arm taken off in exactly the same place. I took charge of the latter as he was brought from the theatre, and on his becoming conscious, the two poor fellows eyed each other till our good-natured Tommy could bear it no longer. 'Sister,' he called, 'give him two cigarettes out of my box, and tell him I sent them. Here is a match. Light one for him.' I took the cigarettes and the message to the Boer, and he turned and looked at Tommy in amazement, and then, quite overcome, he burst into tears. Tommy did the same, and I am afraid I was on the point of joining in, but time would not permit."

In another account of wounded men being brought into this hospital, I read something which showed how well they keep up good humour. One man who had lost a limb was limping along on a

crutch. Did you get any loot?" asked a spectator. "Yes, in my blooming leg," replied Tommy.

It is, of course, true that those who are healthy and happy ought to think of God quite as much as the sick and sorrowful, but this unfortunately they do not do, so it is in military hospitals that chaplains find most opportunities of usefulness.

So merciful is God that He is willing to pardon all who repent, even though their repentance come only at the eleventh hour, but how many people do repent at the eleventh hour? I have seen many men dying, but except in two instances I did not discover that any of them were the least concerned about their souls, or what was to become of them after death. I believe that if people put off the consideration of religion to their last hour they do not think of it then; in nine cases out of ten the dying person is too weak to think of anything. Tired nature cares only for rest, and perhaps, as there is said to be, a sort of numbness which takes hold of an animal (Livingstone felt it when in the grip of a lion) falling into the clutches of a beast of prey, so by the arrangement of a merciful

Providence the swoop of the last enemy may have a narcotic effect upon its victim. Mentioning my experience to a thoughtful but somewhat sceptical medical officer at Netley, he said, "I have seen hundreds of men dying, in peace and war, and I never saw any of them in a funk unless some parson had got at them and put it into them." I hope that my medical friend believed me when I assured him that it is not parsons but sin that causes "funk," and that it is their business to take it away by pointing to a Saviour. A brother chaplain asked a dying soldier if he were afraid to go to God. "No, sir," replied the man very solemnly, "it is of the other beggar that I am afraid."

One night at Netley I was sent for by a dying soldier. Having gone to his bedside, he said: "I knew you before coming here, so you do not seem as strange to me as the other people in this place, and I want you to be with me." Then, after some time, he held out his hand and said: "Well, sir, I met you before at Gosport, and I shall meet you again in Heaven." These were his last words. They were spoken as calmly and in a manner as matter-of-fact as if he

had only said, "I am going into the next ward." I learned from that boy how peacefully an earnest Christian can die, though he talked little about religion, and made no profession of fine feeling.

Soldiers would better appreciate the chaplain's visit to them in hospital if the pernicious notion that religion is only required in the hour of death were less prevalent than it is among them. On one occasion a man whom I asked if I would read to or pray for him answered, "No, thank you, sir, I do not think it is as bad as that with me." I told the man that I had learned from the doctors that his illness was not likely to prove fatal, so I thought he might wish to thank God with me for bringing him safely through it. "If you were going to die immediately, reading and praying would do you little good, but now that you are going to live, they may be of use in helping you to put the life that has been spared to a good account." The man seemed astonished that I should speak of religion as being something required to ennoble and sanctify this present all-important life, for he, it seems, had only thought of it as a graceful accompaniment of the act of dying. Another

man betrayed the fact that he held the same erroneous opinion by saying aloud when I went near his bed, "Oh, here's the parson, they all think that I'm going to kick out, but I shan't this turn."

"When the devil was sick the devil a saint would be,
When the devil was well the devil a saint was he."

I have been often reminded of this couplet in hospital, but never more forcibly than by the action of a man who, thinking that he was going to die, asked me to administer to him the Holy Communion on the following morning. I made all arrangements and had two persons provided to communicate with him. On going to the man punctually at the time appointed, I found that he had had a change for the better during the night, and was pronounced by the doctors to be almost out of danger. With a lowering of his temperature came a lowering of his pious aspirations, for his religion was one of "funk." He told me that *as* he was so much better he did not care to communicate, or, in other words, to take part in the eucharist or great thanksgiving service of our religion. Could the logic of ingratitude further go?

It is little wonder that soldiers should have wrong notions about religion, considering that they share the ignorance of the Bible which so largely prevails even amongst intelligent people in our so-called Bible-loving country. The following instance of Biblical ignorance came under my notice. The healthiest part of Malta is Città Vecchia—that is, old city. It was formerly the capital. In it there is a building once used by the Knights of Malta as a court-house, but now turned into a sanitorium for the reception of sick soldiers from all parts of the island. In one of the hospitals at Malta, a convalescent soldier told me that on the following day he was going to be sent to Città Vic—as they call it. "Oh, then," I said, "you will be in the building which is situated on the spot where, according to tradition, stood the house of Publius, who was the chief man of the island when St Paul was shipwrecked three miles from there, and who entertained the shipwrecked people three days courteously." To my astonishment, the man who was not without intelligence, and who seemed to be rather fond of reading, said that he did not know anything about St Paul's shipwreck. He had

heard of a man of that name, but that was all. I brought him a Bible, gave him the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles to read, and advised him to go as soon as he could to St Paul's Bay, where a monument would show him the exact spot at which the apostle is said to have got to shore. He read the chapters and said that they greatly interested him, "but," he continued, "I never paid any attention to these things before in the Bible, for I always supposed that they were fables." The fact that he was only three or four miles from the place of the shipwreck, and that he was himself recovering from the same maladies—fever and dysentery—from which St Paul healed the father of Publius, these things made him realise as he had never done before the historical truth of St Luke's narrative. There are people who are astonished when they find truth in the Bible, though they believe everything they read in any other book.

But though some men may be frightened when a chaplain proposes to read to or pray with them, others will be surprised and indignant if he omit to do so. One of these latter said to me when I had just

become a chaplain, and had asked him timidly if he would like me to pray with him: "Well, sir, I suppose I have a soul as well as other people." The great thing is, to make the men feel that you are interested in everything that concerns them, and then they will expect you not to be indifferent to their eternal interests.

Talking of prayers in a military hospital, I must record what an Irish soldier said to a nursing sister who had done something to relieve his pain: "How can I thank you, sister? I need not even mention you in my prayers, for there is a place prepared for the likes of you."

At Netley I used to spend nearly all my winter evenings talking to the men as we sat at the fire in the different wards. Their conversation was most interesting. Many had come back from active service in Burmah. In some of the wounded were found pieces of iron, nails, and other things which the dacoits used for bullets. It was a case of "Rubbish shot here!" The men kept the things that were taken out of them as souvenirs, and showed them to me with pride.

There were some very curious cases.

One was that of a man who was shot in exactly the same place at the same time in both arms.

On one occasion a staff officer was superintending the disembarkation of time-expired men, invalids, and other soldiers from a troop-ship which had just arrived from India. The officer went up to a party of men who were drawn up on the jetty waiting for orders, and asked them, "Who are you, and what are you doing here?" "Please, sir, we are the lunatics!" was the startling reply. These lunatics were on their way to the military asylum at Netley, which is situated a short distance from the hospital. Here every Sunday morning I had a service, and never did I see a congregation better behaved or more attentive. If occasionally a man would give an idiotic laugh, a nudge from his neighbour would immediately quiet him. The orderlies used to tell me that they had very little trouble with the men, because those who were recovering, or who were less mad, kept the rest in check. Though the opinion of individual lunatics may not be of much value, the collective or public opinion of a lunatic asylum is

most rational. It is a mistake to think that mad people are all equally mad, or that their affliction is uninterrupted.

There is generally an officer or two patients in the officers' quarters of the Netley asylum, and I used to walk about with them in the grounds for hours without perceiving anything very unusual in their conversation, because I tried to keep them off the subject upon which they were insane. The most difficult cases are those of men who have literally lost their minds, and the religiously mad. There were some men whose minds had become a complete blank. They stared with utterly unintelligent eyes, and did not understand the simplest thing said to them.

Why do people in general think that religion must necessarily be gloomy? One officer used to read the Bible every moment of his time, and it was evident that too much thinking about religion had turned his head. The medical officer in charge of the case asked me not to go often to see him lest it would make him "more melancholy." Of course this gentleman was quite justified, if he thought that his patient's mind required a rest from the

consideration of religion, and that therefore even the sight of a parson would be injurious to him, but he could not have been sure that an attempt to substitute true notions about religion instead of the false ones that tormented him, would not have had the effect of making him less rather than more melancholy.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TWO GREAT EVILS

VISITING the station hospital of the garrison where some years since I was serving, I saw a man with his hand tied up. Having asked him what was wrong with it, he showed me his knuckle, severely cut and very much swollen. "Where did you get that?" I said. "Where I got nearly every other bad thing that ever happened to me; in the public-house," was the soldier's frank reply. He then explained that he was getting up to dance when a drinking companion not wishing him to do so, struck him with a glass on the knuckle. Some of the beer, which must have contained a considerable amount of poison, got into the wound, and caused it to fester.

The bad deeds which send too many of our soldiers to military prisons and hospitals in nine cases out of ten, would never be

done if it were not for drink. It is not known to the uninitiated how many men make themselves ill through excessive drinking, because to save them from punishment the sickness is often called dyspepsia, or a Latin word is employed to cover a multitude of sins. A medical officer accompanied a general who was inspecting a station hospital. The general asked what was the matter with a certain consumptive patient. "Phthisis, sir." "'Phthisis?'—I never heard of it—What is it?" "Commonly called consumption," was the reply. "Why the deuce don't you speak English. Tell me in that language what is wrong with this next man." "Booze," was the unexpected answer.

At a review at Aldershot, two foreign princes, not knowing their way, drove up to a sentry, and asked: "Do you know where the Prince of Wales or the Duke of York is?" "No, sir," replied Thomas Atkins, "I don't know myself, but I'll ask my mate. He knows all the public-houses about here."

We are happy to say that this sort of man is not as common now as he was when the writer entered the service. The attention that has been bestowed upon the food

and surroundings of the soldier, his better education, and the interest now taken in him by earnest people, have effected a great change for the better in his drinking habits.

Certainly, when the supposed patriotism and good-will of civilians took the wrong form of trying to make soldiers going to war in South Africa drunk, even handing them bottles of whisky as they marched to the train, some of them did yield to the temptation; but they did not become "blind, speechless, paralytic drunk," as old officers tell us was the case with the troops who embarked for the Crimea.

Still, I am afraid that even now the notion of "enjoying" themselves which too many soldiers have on going out of an evening, is to sample beer in different public-houses. If three or four men are together, or meet at some "pub," one man pays for the drink of the others. When that is finished another calls for an equal amount for the general good, or rather bad, and so it goes on until each has provided for all on the most approved communistic principle. As if it would not be better to be alone like Robinson Crusoe than to drink when not thirsty only for the sake of company!

Another stupid habit soldiers have is that of drinking hard, however steady they may have been before, and however short the distance to their new abode, whenever their corps is changed from one station to another. It may be a mere excuse, or they may meet with strange soldiers who offer treats, or the "fatigues" and other things may put them out of temper.

In some regiments, it is to be feared that in spite of official watchfulness drink, at hours when the canteen is closed, can be got where it ought not. I have often heard of this evil, but prefer to state it in the words of one who has been a private and non-commissioned officer in *The Queen's Service*, about which he writes so well. "In every battalion there are a number of men who will run any risk and pay any price, provided that they can get a glass of beer or, preferably, spirits in the early morning. To such as these the back-door of a sergeants' mess and an accommodating caterer afford a ready method of obtaining what they want. No officious eyes are prying about at this hour, and the toper can thus indulge himself with but little fear of detection. Of course he is charged about three

times the ordinary price for any liquor procured in this manner, and thus the caterer is enabled to secure a handsome profit for himself. To make his stock-book balance correctly he has merely to enter the sale at a legitimate price to a member of the mess.

In well-ordered messes this sort of thing is but little known, and in properly managed ones never. Private soldiers coming to the caterer for such purposes would very effectually be sent about their business. Unfortunately all messes are not carried on strictly in accordance with the regulations, and in some this sort of thing occurs to an extent that is but little dreamed of by the authorities. Whenever it happens, as it often does, that men are found in barracks as early as nine or ten o'clock in the morning to be under the influence of liquor, Commanding-officers and Adjutants are always greatly puzzled as to where they obtain the means from. They cannot drink in their barrack-rooms, under the eyes of the non-commissioned officer, and the canteen is closed until noon. The real solution of the apparent mystery is too often contained in the facts that I have mentioned."

The first day I visited a military hospital, after arriving at Malta some years ago, a big artilleryman, finding that I was a newcomer, kindly cautioned me by relating his own supposed experience. "But, above all, sir," he said, "don't be taking up with that teetotalism; it is sure to give you the fever. Now, look at me, I'm a man who always took his pot, and for the first two years I was in Malta I drank ten pints of beer every day. Then I thought that as I was leaving the service it was about time for me to put by a little bit of money, and I went on the dead, as we say. The very next day I got the fever, and if I get over it, I'll watch giving up my ten pints a day." Not a word about the ten pints causing the fever!

Mentioning this reply to a young officer, he told me what another bibulous gunner had said to his commanding officer that morning, on being asked if he had any excuse to give for being drunk. "It's like this, sir," he said. "I had been stationed at Fort D——" (a remote little fort where beer could not be obtained), "and when I came into headquarters I own I did take a few *quarts*!"

A soldier once told me that he believed

every man drank as much as he could afford. "What about the Duke of Westminster, then?" I asked, "whose income is a thousand pounds a day, and who is said to be a total abstainer." The man looked incredulous and perplexed, and said: "Then, sir, he must be mad."

But, as I have said, things are greatly improving. Human sponges are disappearing from the Army. The Army Temperance Society, so well led by Lord Roberts, is doing great things, and now I honestly believe that soldiers are more temperate than the same class in civilian life, and that if they appear not to be, it is because their uniform makes more conspicuous the few who disgrace themselves in the streets. It is said that no less than 22 per cent. in the army are teetotalers.

In the yard of Winchester Cathedral there used to be a tombstone with the following inscription:—

"Sacred to the memory of WILLIAM THATCHER,
Private in the —— Regiment, who caught his death by drinking, when hot, cold small beer.

An honest soldier never is forgot,
Whether he die by musket or by pot;
Soldiers be wise, from his untimely fall,
And when you're hot, drink strong or none at all."

Imagine lines like these written in our day. We think that either a soldier or a civilian who "dies by pot" is a disgrace to humanity.

When comparing a soldier with a civilian we should make allowance for the greater temptations which the former has. The first thing a recruit hears from those who wish to get money out of him, is that to drink is a soldier-like accomplishment. Considering that most of the necessities of life are provided for him, that there are many "billets" by which he can add to his pay, a soldier has often more money to spend, and certainly, if he be in the Infantry, more idle time on his hands than have most working-men. Then he is forced to live away from his friends, and often in countries where, because he does not know their language, he cannot make friends of the inhabitants. The dulness of this life drives him to drink, as also the fact that in some foreign stations, as a soldier once said to me, "Drink is cheap, and you are always dry." In Malta, for instance, it is possible to get madly drunk for three halfpence.

Kipling speaks of "gentlemen rankers out on a spree," and I am sorry to have to say

that there are "gentlemen privates"—men whose birth and early training should have made them different—who are so far from conferring a benefit upon the regiment in which they enlist, that they are looked upon almost with terror by commanding officers. They get money from friends with which they demoralise half the men of their companies, or if their friends are not foolish enough to send it to them, they sometimes fall in for legacies which cause even a lower fall in morals. The first thing one of these fortunate unfortunates did on being left a considerable sum of money by a deceased aunt, was to assemble the squadron in which he was a trooper, march them off to the canteen, and give them drink all round. He soon found himself in the military prison, where I made his acquaintance.

The change that has taken place in the opinions and habits of officers in reference to drinking is very marked. Instead of brandies and sodas, most of them now take five o'clock tea, and the quantity of wine drunk at mess is very much less than used to be the case.

Many commanding officers do all they can to encourage their men in sobriety. One

I knew well, who one day out walking met a man who had thirty-six drunks in his defaulter's sheet—it was before short service came out. Stopping him the colonel said: "You are a fine man"—he was six feet three inches—"and yet, don't you think that you are making a precious ass of yourself. Now if I were to put a lance-corporal's stripe on your arm to-morrow, how would it be?" The man took the pledge and never drank again, even on his wedding-day. The colonel looked in at a festal gathering on that occasion, and the man said to him: "You see all that liquor on the table? Well, I have not tasted a drop, and won't, for if I did, I would have to get drunk." When the man became a sergeant he was recommended by the colonel for some confidential post. The general asked the colonel what he meant by recommending a man with thirty-six drunks in his defaulter's sheet. When the story was told to him, he said that he had never heard anything so remarkable.

One reason why commanding officers do not give teetotalism as much of their sympathy as might be expected, is because they know that many soldiers are in the habit of abstaining for a time only in order to save money

for a "big burst." They are "on the dead" when money is not forthcoming, and when it is they "break the teapot" so effectually that frequently they drink themselves into a military prison. Almost all officers would be delighted if the men would permanently abstain, but since they will not, it is, they consider, better that they should take their pint or two of beer regularly, than that they should abstain at intervals and then drink to excess. A distinguished commanding officer told me that when a man was brought before him for "drunk," and begged to be let off on the plea that he would sign the pledge, he (the commanding officer) invariably replied, "I don't want you to turn teetotaler; I only want you to put yourself upon the same level with the pig—a most intelligent animal—for it always knows when it has had enough, and leaves off."

After having gained four good conduct badges a soldier gets a good conduct medal. This is called by the men the "canteen medal," because it is often obtained by those who drink a great deal, but who have hard heads, and enough cunning not to be caught. It would really be almost a sign of grace in some soakers if they would get drunk and

then have done with it, but nothing can be worse than to be always tippling.

It is remarked of persons who have drunk alcoholic liquors to excess that they are brutally drunk, although the only beverage indulged in, as a rule, by brutes is water. The vice of consuming strong drink to excess is unnatural, and one that belongs only to men. And yet there are exceptions to this rule, and these show how easily bad habits are acquired. Boys sometimes think that it is manly to smoke and drink, and practise other habits which men are very sorry that they ever acquired. The following true case shows that to do this may be something very different from manly.

Some nine years since I knew "Billy," the pet goat of the first battalion of the Welsh regiment at Malta, where we were both stationed. Then, he was a sober, honest, and, except on rare occasions, quiet animal. From there he came with his battalion to Plymouth, where I had the honour of renewing his acquaintance; but how changed, how fallen was William! He had acquired drinking habits. The battalion marched through Wales on its way from Pembroke Dock to Plymouth, and the people of the

country it passed through, hearing that Billy was "fond of a drop," used to give him both beer and spirits. "That goat, sir," said an old soldier of the regiment to me, a little enviously, "used to be drunk three or four nights in the week when we were on the march." So depraved did Billy become, that he would charge and butt a man if he saw him drinking a pot of beer and he did not share it. On this march the regimental pet got rheumatism and liver complaint, and the latter was aggravated by beer and tobacco. We do not know what aspirations were in Billy's breast, or whether he said to himself, "Let me like a soldier fall!" but it is sad to record that Billy came if not to a drunkard's grave, at least to one which was half dug by his drinking habits.

One of the questions which we chaplains have to answer in our annual report is: "What special efforts have you made to combat the sins of drunkenness and impurity?" Probably each chaplain has a different way of working, but most of us try to do what we can. And sometimes temperance work in the army is very discouraging. Soldiers are willing to sign a total abstinence pledge in prison or after Christmas, when they have

neither money nor credit, but with a change of circumstances the promise is too often broken. As I think it is almost as bad to be a liar as a drunkard, I always beg them to give or send me back their cards before they cease to abstain.

At my first station I got up a most elaborate lecture against drink, and the officers were good enough to dine earlier to attend the meeting. After waiting some time for an audience the colonel sent a sergeant to see if any of the men were coming. He returned to say: "Please, sir, this is pay-day, and every one is in the canteen." I have not, however, always been so unfortunate.

Apart from formal addresses there are many opportunities for giving a hint on the subject. One used to be supplied by a very wise horse I had in Bermuda. After riding her five miles to an outlying camp where there was an early service, on returning for the service at headquarters a soldier took the horse, which in summer would be very hot, to the stables. From time to time several soldiers did this, but they all made the same answer when I asked them to give her water: "It would kill her, sir, she's too

hot." When I told them that my horse, different in this from some men, knew when not to drink, and insisted upon water being given, "Stella" would wet her lips, but not drink any of it till she had cooled. Perhaps it was in return for this lesson in self-restraint that one soldier groom, who had been employed in a large circus before enlisting, wished to educate "Stella" in circus tricks, and was even generous enough to propose to teach my cow to dance! I begged him not to think of such a thing, feeling sure that her supply of milk would not be increased in this way.

We are all familiar with the terrible revelations made as to the temptations of our army in India. Much as we are divided with regard to certain legislative measures, we are all agreed as to the necessity of efforts being put forth to grapple with the problem presented by a soldier's life. Let us remember that a large number of our private soldiers are drawn from a class that have never received any teaching on the subject of purity, beyond that conveyed in filthy jests and coarse jocularity. They join the Service as mere boys, low traditions abound all

round them, barrack life excludes them from the purifying influences of family life, and association with pure women. Under these conditions our lads are left, in the words of a well-known medical man, "to blunder like blind puppies into sin." With what results to themselves let the wards of Netley Hospital declare, where men, often under twenty-five years of age, lie unrecognisable from the disfigurement of disease, and in so repulsive a condition that their own friends and relatives refuse to receive them. Even this result is less terrible than the thought of the 8190 infected men who are annually discharged and turned loose upon the civil population to become centres of disease and degradation to others.

This evil is one that injures women and children far more than men. It is difficult to determine how far the Contagious Disease Act was successful in preventing a state of things that is now becoming quite awful. If facts and the experience of experts show that it did to a considerable degree prevent this most terrible plague, then it seems to me that religion, humanity, and science, demand at least a modifica-

tion of it being again tried. We should not allow ourselves to be prejudiced by a phrase, nor surrender vital issues to people whose goodness does not save them from ignorance and folly. It is not a question of legalising vice, but of legislating for a vice which cannot be ignored, and surely there is nothing which so much requires to be legislated for as vice. In reference to impurity, out of sight is often out of mind, but in our garrison towns, the young soldier is never allowed to forget. There is one cavalry regiment where I am now stationed, and the attentions of do-as-you-like vice to them is so great, that some men tell me they are almost afraid to go out of barracks at night. This state of things is unknown in the garrison towns on the Continent with which I am familiar. There women must be one thing or the other, and the bad are not always in the sight of recruits fresh from the country.

In Great Britain, the admissions into military hospitals for venereal diseases are more than seven times greater than in the Prussian army, four and a half times greater than in the French, three times greater than in the Austrian, and 90 per cent.

more than in the Italian army. As in India the ratio of admissions is more than two and a half times that of the army in England, there can be no doubt of the urgency of the question.

But, of course, it is with the religious and moral remedies for this evil that chaplains are most concerned. We occasionally give or get experts to give lectures on the subject; we distribute White Cross literature. In the hospitals we sometimes get an opportunity of talking to a man alone pretty straight about the deadliness of this sin. Most difficult it is to convince the men, or even the officers, that it is a sin at all, much less a "deadly sin." "Is it not natural?" they ask, and then, over and over, the old argument has to be used, that what is natural is that conscience, reason, and will should rule passion and not the reverse. An argument that the men understand is to appeal to their honour and sense of duty, and say that to incapacitate themselves by illness from serving their country, should an emergency arise, is as bad as desertion. The officers may be asked to lead the men as straight in this battle as they would, and do,

in a fight against Boers and others. One officer told me that his own experience of temptation being resisted by grace made him feel the truth of the words in the Holy Communion—that our sinful bodies are made clean by Christ's body.

CHAPTER XVII

RELIGION IN THE ARMY

BEFORE answering the question whether many soldiers are religious, we should know what is meant by the word. "Religion" and "religious" are popularly used in a far too narrow sense. The number of soldiers who could truthfully be called religious in the common acceptation of the word, may not be large, but they compare not unfavourably with civilians of the same class. Being young and healthy, they are not much disposed to think of the problems of life, and they have peculiar temptations arising from the fact that they are taken away early from home influences, have a considerable amount of pocket money, and a good deal of idle time on their hands.

On the other hand, there are as many or more circumstances in their lives that

are favourable to thoughtfulness. Of these the most important is discipline. It was from this that the centurion drew an illustration which made him seek the help of Our Lord when his servant was sick. "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, 'Go,' and he goeth; and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it." If, he argued, my word of command is obeyed in this way, surely the Lord and Giver of life has not less authority over the powers of health and sickness, of life and death.

The liability to a sudden death in time of war acts differently upon different natures. The majority of soldiers are induced by it to adopt the maxim, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." They desire that their lives should be merry if short, and they are mistaken enough to think that they will be more merry and happy if they do not allow themselves to think of religion. There are, however, many upon whom the uncertainty of their lives has an opposite effect. If they number their days, it is that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom and not unto folly.

They wish to be able to say, "I die daily;" that is, I am ready to die every day I live. They try, as did General Havelock, to so order their lives that when death comes they may face it without fear.

Soldiers may be apparently careless about religion in time of peace, although with many of them this carelessness is only apparent; but when the day of battle comes almost all of them think of God.

> "Methinks I see how spirits may be tried,
> Transfigured into beauty on war's verge,
> Like flowers, whose tremulous grace is learnt beside
> The trampling of the surge."

There are soldiers who might, perhaps, allow their comrades to laugh them out of their religion in time of peace, but who would not give it up at the demand of an insulting foe during war.

Rough English soldiers taken prisoners in the course of the Indian Mutiny were offered a choice between the recantation of their faith and death by horrible tortures. They were all alone; they had no hope of rescue; they did not know that those at home in England would ever

hear of their fate, yet not one of them failed in his duty to his religion.

A sergeant, writing home after the battle of Elandslaagte, says:

"It simply hailed bullets when we got to within 600 yards of the enemy's position. But on we went with fixed bayonets, charged the position, and won; but at what cost! The sights would turn you cold—headless bodies, limbs lying about everywhere—for our artillery made grand work on the enemy. I found one young fellow, badly wounded, talking about his mother and his home, and it touched me, for the enemy are white people like ourselves. We had to remain on the battle-field all night, collecting the dead and wounded of both sides. What with the continuous rain and the groans of the wounded, it was a night I shall never forget. I offered a small prayer up, thanking God for my safety. It is rough work, sometimes no food all day. But we are soldiers, doing soldiers' duty."

We may be sure that this "small prayer of thanksgiving" from a soldier doing his duty, was a *Te Deum* acceptable, well-pleasing unto God.

The strongest and most consistent Christians I have ever known have been soldiers. When these men are religious at all, they are very religious. Humbug and hypocritical professions cannot conceal themselves from the somewhat fierce

criticism of the barrack-room. Perhaps it is owing to this compulsory earnestness that officers and men in the army and navy are generally inclined to be fanatical when they are religious at all. Certainly the most extreme ritualists and Plymouth Brethren whom I have met have been either in the Services or lately retired from them.

In former days an English "common soldier" was altogether ignored or scorned as an outcast. Now, however, his red coat seems to attract the attention of all kinds of people who have religious remedies to dispose of, either real or quack ones.

In most garrison towns at home there is a soldier's Institute, which is a great boon to religiously disposed men, especially on Sundays. Here they read or write home without being disturbed, and meet good friends. They sit and sing hymns for hours together. They join Bible-classes, attend prayer-meetings, and go to services. And if occasionally religion is misrepresented by the self-chosen conductors of these exercises, a great deal of false doctrine will fall harmlessly off Thomas Atkins, and he might have been in places where

those whom he would have met would not have been even well-meaning.

All honour to those who first thought of soldiers' Institutes, and who established them at great expense of time and money, against much opposition. You may sympathise with some of the Esaus who do not go to them, and not with all the Jacobs who do; but you cannot deny that they are a refuge from the temptations of garrison towns, which are particularly rampant on the day which should be the Lord's, but which, in these towns, is too often the devil's.

These places are generally managed by ladies, whose refining influence makes a marked change upon all who are fortunate enough to come under it. To say that in some of these Institutes the moral nature of soldiers may be coddled, and that the religion taught in them is a narrow, emotional, hymn-singing kind rather than that which is broad, manly, and practical, is only to say that, like everything else that is human, they are not free from disadvantages.

When Tommy Atkins is far from his relations, and finds it hard to meet real

friends, it is a great relief to him to talk over his affairs with educated, godly ladies at an Institute. It was rather a shock, however, to one of these ladies to hear from a big dragoon, whom she had invited to pray with her about some difficulty he was in, "I can't, Miss—my britches are too tight." It may here be remarked that the same reason for not kneeling in church is often given by cavalry men to chaplains.

But, indeed, the only real objection to soldiers' Institutes is their name, which is too long, and savours of mendicity institutes. Why not call them simply soldiers' clubs? This sounds jollier, and would be more fetching. If they were managed as clubs, and not as places of worship, many more men would go to them. From the Church of England Institutes, at least, soldiers are never deterred by

> "It's Tommy this, and Tommy that, and
> Tommy, 'how's your soul?'"

There are no solicitations to take part in "knee-drill" out of season.

In these places they are neither patronised nor button-holed, nor asked impertinent

questions. Soldiers can use them as clubs only. Chaplains and other officers visit them, but they move amongst the men quite freely and sociably. There is always a room set apart for prayer and religious services, and every opportunity is afforded to those who desire counsel and help in the spiritual life to obtain it, but there is no attempt to "drive religion" into them.

The army has a special claim upon the Church of England, not merely from the national character of both institutions, but also from its composition. The official returns issued from the War Office give the religious denominations as follows:—Church, 68·6 per cent.; Roman Catholic, 17·9; Presbyterian, 7·5; Wesleyan, 5·3; other Protestants, ·7.

No doubt the *raison d'être* of armies is to be killing machines, but I prefer to think of ours as an excellent school in time of peace, the discipline of which saves thousands of discontented, distressed, dangerous men from idleness and dissipation. And the more civilians take a practical interest in the religious and moral character of the soldier, the better will it be for themselves in these days of short service, when from 10,000 to

15,000 men return from the army to civil life every year, to be useful members of society, or to be useless and corrupters of others.

If a garrison town is, of all places, the one where the most telling home mission work may be carried on, and where those whom the Church confessedly fails to influence may most easily be affected for good, so too, the army might become of the greatest assistance to mission workers abroad. A missionary means one sent, and our soldiers are sent more than any other people to heathen lands. When there, they either adorn the doctrine of their Saviour, or by their bad example keep people away from Him.

Indirectly, then, the religion and morals of soldiers are of great importance, and directly they largely influence their own work.

Napoleon and almost every other thoughtful commander have been ready to admit that moral power, as it is the greatest in peace, is also the greatest in war. The marked diminution in that most expensive commodity, crime, which has taken place of late years in the Services, must materially relieve the tax-payer, or leave much money at liberty for other purposes. Even when

commanding officers have little or no religion themselves, they recognise the powerful influence for good which it has from a Service point of view upon those whom they command. When bluff old Sale, Havelock's commanding officer, heard Havelock and the soldiers whom he had influenced ridiculed as saints, he said: "I wish to God my whole regiment were 'Havelock's Saints,' for I never hear of one of these saints being in the guard-room or his name in the defaulter's book."

It is related of Lord Clyde that on one occasion he asked his officers to pick out the bravest men from his small army before Delhi, to form the forlorn hope in a desperate attack. It was on a Sunday evening. "There is a prayer-meeting going on now," they said, "in the camp. If you go there, you will find all the bravest men!"

If army chaplains are blamed for not getting more soldiers to their voluntary services, they can retort that the same class of men are conspicuous by their absence from civilian churches, and that if civilian ministers of the Gospel had better looked after boys before they joined the army, we chaplains would not have such uphill work.

Of course, there is an increasing number of bright exceptions, but army chaplains are painfully aware that little is done for the spiritual and moral benefit of the majority of soldiers before they enlist. Certainly the number of Church of England young soldiers who have not been confirmed shows that there has been carelessness somewhere. Generally, they come to us without any real religion, prodigal children of the loving Father, with but few thoughts of God, or hopes of heaven. How is it that we get so few letters from parochial clergymen about recruits?

Soldiers are fond of singing, and take much interest, not perhaps in the music at parade services, but in the choir which the chaplain organises for the voluntary evening service.

Whatever may be said about tunes, it is a sad fact that very often the devil gets the best voices. I induced a soldier who had a magnificent voice to join my choir, believing his professions, and hoping that he would try to realise in his week-day life the words he sang so beautifully on Sunday evenings. Alas! I had soon to get rid of him, because he would sing in the canteen and in

public-houses songs that were anything but elevating.

There are soldiers who are too fond of hymn-singing, and I sometimes think that the habit of sitting and singing hymns in a free-and-easy way for hours together in a soldier's Institute cannot but have an emasculating effect upon their moral natures. The too frequent use of sacred words, the adopting as one's own spiritual feelings that have never been felt, singing the holiest thoughts irreverently, and merely to pass the time—this sort of thing is very hardening. It makes me shudder when I hear, in passing barrack-rooms, men whom I know to have bad moral characters singing in joke, or as a common song, hymns which they learned in church or elsewhere.

Some soldiers who had absented themselves from duty told their commanding officer that they were attending a religious meeting. The colonel asked what sort of meeting it was, and was told that there were tea and hymns at it. The grim sergeant-major was heard to mutter, "More likely there were tea and hers." The ladies of the congregation had, he felt sure, added to the attraction of the meeting.

The *Queen's Regulations* say that, "General and other officers commanding are to render chaplains every possible assistance in carrying out their duties," and I must say that from the highest to the humblest in the army I have been helped in my work, and especially in any efforts that have been made to bring soldiers to the evening service, which is an institution in every garrison. Religious soldiers like a voluntary service as much as they dislike the parade form of godliness. They will take much trouble in decorating a chapel school so that it may look less hideous on Christmas or Easter, and I knew one bandsman who used to pay boys out of his own scanty funds for singing in a choir organised by him.

One must be cautious in accepting the services of an officer who is unpopular Once, in an evil hour, a very good man, but one who was greatly disliked owing to an unfortunate manner and to the fact that he had many "fads," volunteered to read the lessons for me. I always like to get laymen to do this, for it shows that they take an interest that is not merely professional in the service. In this case,

however, I was sorry that I had consented, for very soon several soldiers informed me that they would come no longer to my evening service "if that man reads the Bible to us."

A country clergyman was impressing upon his gardener the importance of giving due attention to the pulpit, and told him to provide himself with a pencil and paper and take notes. Next Sunday morning he was glad to perceive John busily following his advice. After the service, he accosted him on his way home and asked to see his notes. After some demur John produced his paper. To the clergyman's astonishment it was scrawled all over with unintelligible words and sentences. "Why, John, this is all nonsense," he said, somewhat indignantly. "'Deed, sir, to tell you the honest truth, I thocht that a' the time ye was preaching!" Of course, if our preaching is of this kind, soldiers will not come and hear us; but if we try to talk to them (not read to them) in what they call a "straight" way, our evening services will be well attended. Especially is this the case abroad, where, if they cannot speak the language of the country, soldiers

lead lonely lives, and are glad to go to any place where they understand what is said.

While it is an advantage for soldiers who cannot, or who find it inconvenient to leave barracks to have evening service conducted for them on the premises, so to speak, others prefer to go to a civilian church, unless, indeed, as is sometimes the case, they are put into seats near the door, where they can see and hear nothing, only because they wear the Queen's uniform. A soldier likes to get away from the adjutant and sergeant-major, just as we all, when school-boys, liked to get away from the masters. He is sick of red-coats, red-tape, and military life generally, and it is a relief to him to go to some church at a distance from barracks, where he can see civilians and his own "Mary Jane," or, we should rather say, "Theresa Violet," as "lady helps" are no longer known by the monosyllabic names that sufficed for their predecessors.

It is the habit of certain persons who fancy that they monopolise religion, both in the army and out of it, to represent chaplains as "unconverted" men, who

think of themselves only as officers appointed to grind out parade services, bless colours, say the shortest possible grace on guest nights, at mess dinners, and make out their allowance claims each month correctly.

No doubt chaplains are a bad lot, but, like him to whom we are said to be going, we are not as black as we are painted. A chaplain my age may be of little account, but the juniors seem to be doing great things.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY BOMBAY BRANCH

CHAPTER XVIII

CHURCH PARADE

IN the *Queen's Regulations* all officers in command are ordered "to take care that Divine Service is regularly performed for the troops under their orders," and they are "to induce the wives and families of the men, by every means in their power, to attend public worship."

Much may be said for as well as against the regulation. If it be urged by its opponents that it is treating soldiers and their families like children "to drum them to church," it may be replied that when they live in barracks they must obey rules, and that they soon become as accustomed to go to church as they do to get up early in the mornings, attend the gymnasium, or do anything else that benefits them. If all were not ordered to go to church, the men who would wish to attend might

Photo] [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

CHURCH PARADE Grand Muster).
Corps of Commissionaires at Westminster.

be almost prevented by the scoffs of those who did not. In some regiments the wives "on the strength" are not compelled to attend a place of worship as strictly as in others; and a sergeant's wife said to me that she wished the colonel were more strict in this respect; for as it was, the women who did go to church were said by the others to be proud, and only to go because they wanted to show their clothes. If some in a community will not give others the liberty to do right, then it is better to force all to do it; and if soldiers think or say that to make them attend Parade Services is a survival of the grandmotherly legislation which prevailed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when every one was legally bound to attend church, they may comfort themselves with the reflection that even now civilians are not altogether free in this respect. Mrs Grundy is more powerful than ever Queen Elizabeth was, and many go to a place of worship to propitiate her who would never think of doing so to please the Almighty. Is not this why the fashionable people who assemble in the London parks after Divine Service are said to attend Church Parade?

A better argument against compulsory church is, that it is impossible to force worship, and that a man who is obliged to go to church against the grain seldom benefits by doing so. In my experience, it is not the most, but often the least, religious commanding officer who is strictest in this matter. One such I have in my mind's eye. He never attended church himself, but was most particular that every one else should do so. On one occasion, when a soldier's wife was a few minutes late, he threatened that if this occurred again he would have the women of the regiment paraded and marched to church before the band. Talking to this officer one day about Parade Services, I remarked that many people were of opinion that soldiers should not be forced to attend them. "Not go to church!" he said, with horror; "why, that would be subversive of all discipline. Where would we find our men? — one half of them would spend Sunday in the public-house, and the other half lolling on their cots."

It is the parade, and not the church, that such commanding officers think of when advocating Church Parades. And

this leads me to what is, to my mind, a strong argument in favour of them. If soldiers were not obliged by the *Queen's Regulations* to attend Divine Service, they would be in danger of losing their weekly day of rest altogether. Some commanding officers would try to make them do drills and parades on Sunday as much as on any other day. But, of course, the chief reason why there are these Parade Services is, that a public recognition of the Divine existence and Providence is due from institutions like the Army and Navy in a country not professedly atheistical.

I am afraid that the hour before soldiers fall-in for Church Parade is not as hallowed as every hour of Sunday should be. The men are tempted to use bad language to their helmets, swords, or bayonets when these require elbow-grease. Nor does it put them in the best humour for appreciating Divine Service, to have—"Might be a little more burnish on that sword"; "There's a stain on that helmet"; "You haven't half polished those boots," and other fault-finding remarks, addressed to them immediately before by the sergeant-major and adjutant. Because of this, and

the fact that some commanding officers will inspect stables, etc., on Sunday, in the barrack-room the Fourth Commandment is rendered as enjoining "labour for six days, and hard labour on the seventh."

The Parade Service is almost the only opportunity which a soldier has for getting alone, or at least uninterruptedly with his God. If the prayers are of a too general kind to greatly interest him, he can read his own individual wants, desires, and aspirations between the lines. If, however, we may judge from the marked attention which many soldiers pay at Parade Services they are not uninterested. I remember once reading a wrong collect at one of these services. Talking afterwards to a sergeant he told me of my mistake, and when I remarked with a little surprise, that he was well posted up in these matters, he reminded me that soldiers attend Divine Service quite as often, and in many cases far oftener than do the rest of the community. Another time when the service had to be shortened I purposely left out the General Thanksgiving, and an officer afterwards suggested to me that it would have been better to have omitted

some other part, for, he said, "Tommy likes to thanksgive."

Bread cast upon the waters at Parade Services has come again after many days, or when it has been most wanted. A soldier who was mortally wounded in the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was heard in the field hospital praying in the words of the hymn :—

> "Jesu, lover of my soul,
> Let me to Thy bosom fly."

A comrade who knew that he had been careless about these things asked him where he had learned the words. The wounded lad replied: "They used to sing them at the Parade Service at Portsmouth."

Chaplains should be careful to choose hymns that are suitable to the occasion, and that do not suggest individual application. A regiment had been route-marching five or six days before Sunday, and had completed a hundred miles. The first hymn at the Parade Service began, "Art thou weary?" A chorus of half-suppressed "yes" was heard by the chaplain after he had read the words.

But there are some soldiers who do not

seem to wish to hear anything. They like to get a seat as near the door of the church as possible, or in a gallery, or, if the service is held out of doors, as far as possible from the chaplain. Nor are commanding officers always as careful as they might be to arrange troops in the field so that they can be all reached by the voice. I used laughingly to say to one of them that he seemed to think that if heard I might exercise a bad influence upon his men. Still, with all its drawbacks, a Parade Service is a great opportunity. We have before us a large number of young and healthy men, and it is our duty to warn them against the temptations of fiery youth, and direct them to Him who, when He beheld a young man anxious about his highest interests, loved him. May God forgive some of us chaplains for not making more of these opportunities!

A clergyman officiating to troops must temper zeal with a little knowledge of the Service. He should always remember that soldiers are forced to go to church, and abstain from unusual ritual or practices that are unmeaning to them. A party

of Yorkshire militiamen were marched to a church where incense was used. One of them, in the midst of the service, pulled out a pipe and lit it. A sergeant rushed at him and asked what he meant by doing so. He answered, "I saw that bloke lighting up, so I thought that I might do the same." He referred to the incense that was introduced at this place in the service.

The way soldiers express themselves in reference to things ecclesiastical would make some "good churchmen" almost weep. A church orderly speaks of "telling off" the lessons, when he means finding them, calls the eagle lectern "that bird," asks if he will fill the bath, which is what he understands by the font, and is generally irreverent without in the least knowing or intending it.

A Parade Service ought not to last longer than an hour, and it is often necessary or expedient to make it shorter. The reply of a judge to a clergyman who asked him how long an assize sermon should be, was: "Twenty minutes, with a leaning to mercy." The Duke of Wellington seems to have been of the same opinion, for he used to say to

chaplains: "Put all you can into twenty minutes, but I won't wait any longer." In these rapid days many commanding officers would not like to wait so long. If a chaplain goes on "gassing"—that is to say, prosing or talking nonsense, is not understood, or is not heard—a volley of coughs will make him aware of the fact; and if he do not take the hint, the noise will increase so much that it will seem as if all the warriors sitting before him had suddenly been attacked with infantine whooping-cough. At my first station most of the troops were either cavalry or horse artillery. Having in my inexperience continued preaching on one occasion a little after the usual dinner-hour of the horses, demands for oats were neighed so loudly from the stables (the dumb ass, as it were, forbidding the madness of the prophet), that I had hastily to conclude, amidst the suppressed titters of the men, some of whom, no doubt, would have liked to give an extra handful of corn to their faithful steeds for rescuing them from a longer sermon.

It is the "muscular Christian" and not the "miserable sinner" type of Christianity that appeals to soldiers. "Straight talk" in a sermon is rather appreciated at a Parade

Service. One regiment which I was with was composed nearly all of miners. Some of them had been behaving badly, so I told the regiment that they might know how to behave under ground, but that they certainly did not above it. Instead of being angry, they said that I had told them off properly.

In the vestry one morning before the Parade Service I got an anonymous letter asking me how many in the garrison were converted, and if I had had that blessed experience myself. I asked the church orderly if he knew who wrote it. He said that he did not, but that it was generally thought that no army chaplain was converted. I read the letter aloud instead of a sermon, and it was listened to with the deepest attention. Suspecting that the writer was present, I told the men that we should feel greatly obliged for the interest taken in us, because charity to the soul is the soul of charity. The question, I said, was the most important that could be asked, but as I could not answer for them, I would leave that to themselves to do.

Soldiers dislike to be constantly spoken to as soldiers and treated as a class by themselves. A bishop, whom I once asked

to preach at a Parade Service, said to me: "What is the best way of speaking to soldiers?" "As to human beings," I suggested, and hinted that he need not prepare any military illustrations or anecdotes. He took the hint, and addressed them as an ordinary congregation, very sympathetically, but without appearing to know that they were soldiers, or reminding them of a fact which they like occasionally to forget. So pleased were they that many of them walked four miles to a church where the bishop was to preach in the evening.

"Remember, my boy," said a dying wine-merchant to his son, "that wine may be made of everything, even of grapes." We might parody this, and say that a Parade Service may be held everywhere, even in a church. There are some military churches, and they are not all ugly or deficient in fittings and furniture. In many places, however, we use a chapel-school: a building which, as its name implies, serves as a school during week-days. Sometimes we have not even this accommodation, and then a riding-school, a gymnasium, a drill-shed, or, what is best of all, God's own cathedral under the blue sky is used.

Referring to a riding-school in which a cavalry regiment used to have Church Parade, a trooper remarked to his chaplain: "It's hard to pray in a place we are sworn at." Then riding-masters and their assistants did swear.

When I served at Malta I had two open-air Parade Services each Sunday. Of course in the heat of summer these were held at hours so early, that many people in England would think them almost improper for Sunday rising. These open-air services were necessarily short, as sometimes the sun was becoming very hot, or the wind was so strong that leaves were torn out of my book (the seed of the Word literally blown away) and my surplice sent over my head and eyes. Then it was tiresome for the men to stand in a square in one position all the time. Still, the scenery around, even if the chaplain had been dumb, should have preached eloquent sermons. The blue sky ought to have suggested the Heavenly Father's smile, and the waves dashing against the rocks could scarcely have failed to illustrate, for those who saw and thought, human life.

Military chapels and chapel-schools are

used at different hours by Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian chaplains. The Royal Engineers have invented most ingenious contrivances for settling theological differences. Altars are made for Roman Catholics that are easily moved aside, covered with a screen, or taken to pieces and carried into a boarded-off receptacle, before the Presbyterian Service begins. At one church the seats were made reversible like those on the top of a tram-car. This might have been regarded as a symbol of how easily Mr Facing-both-ways can change his religion, but was readily admitted by priest, parson, and Presbyterian minister to be a clever mechanical contrivance for enabling them to live and work happily together.

At one station I was provided with a communion-table and railing so cunningly contrived, that it was difficult to get a church orderly clever enough to learn how to manipulate it.

Probably there is no place of worship that does so much Sunday duty as the chapel of Netley Hospital. From seven o'clock on Sunday morning till eight in the evening, this building is scarcely idle a single hour, one denomination of convalescents and

officials taking the place of another. What a saving of stone and mortar, not to speak of its utility as an aid to toleration, it would be were this practice adopted in the civilian world! As it is, there is only too much truth in the answer which a driver made to a fare who remarked, when driving through a Scotch town, that it must be a very religious place, because there were so many churches in it—"It's not religion at all; it's just their bad temper!"

Every soldier is "at full liberty to attend the worship of Almighty God according to the forms prescribed by his own religion."

Now and then recruits come up who do not seem to have any religion. The recruiting-sergeant asks them, "What religion?" and they answer more truthfully than many who consider themselves their superiors, "None," or "None that I knows of." A choice, however, must be made, and such men generally put themselves down as "Church of England."[1] Protestants who do not come into this Cave

[1] Church of England men are known as the "Band Party," because, as they are the most numerous, the band accompanies them. This is the chief reason why those who have not yet discovered their religion put down "Church of England."

of Adullam are generally classed with Presbyterians and Wesleyans. "Other fancy religions," as a commanding officer once called them on parade, are looked upon with suspicion, as though a soldier by professing to belong to them were trying to shirk Church Parade altogether.

"What's yer religious persuasion?" said a sergeant to a recruit—"My what?" —"Yer what? Why what I said. What's yer after o' Sundays?"—"Rabbits mostly." —"'Ere, stow that lip. Come, now, Chu'ch, Chapel, or 'oly Roman?" And after explanation from his questioner the recruit replied: "I ain't nowise pertickler. Put me down Chu'ch of England, sergeant. I'll go with the band."

An officer who was present when a militia regiment was about to be inspected before marching off to Divine Service, told me the following:—One man was loitering about, and the sergeant asked him in forcible terms why he did not fall in. He replied that he was a Unitarian. "Unitarian?" asked the sergeant; "what's that? There are only three religions; fall in with the Roman Catholics."

How terribly "regimental" some military

men are in reference even to the holiest matters is illustrated by an experience which an acting chaplain is said to have had. A short time after beginning to do duty with troops, this gentleman complained to the commanding officer that no men attended Holy Communion. The following Sunday there were about forty communicants. Greatly pleased, the clergyman asked the commanding officer how the change was brought about. "Oh!" he replied, "I told the sergeant-major to detail a party for Communion!" Another chaplain asked a soldier, who professed to be religious, why he never remained for Holy Communion. "I thought, sir," he replied, "that it was only meant for officers."

A man must adhere to what at first he puts down, or allows to be put down, as his religion. He can only change afterwards by getting permission from his commanding officer; and frequently this permission is asked for reasons that are anything but serious. When I hear of a soldier wishing to change what he is pleased to call his religion, I say to myself, "Who is she?"—for I know that nine times out of ten a woman is at the bottom of it.

At Bermuda the Wesleyan chapel was a mile and a half from barracks, while the Church of England Service was performed in barracks. Probably, too, I preached shorter sermons than the Wesleyan minister. At all events, several Wesleyan soldiers suddenly began to admire my form of worship, and told their commanding officer that they wished to go to the Church of England Service. He said that they must talk the matter over with me, and get me to write a statement of their reasons for desiring to change "religions." What I wrote for one man was: "So-and-so finds a march of a mile and a half disagreeable when the thermometer stands at eighty-three degrees in the shade." I know a man who wanted to attend the Roman Catholic Service rather than the Church of England for no better reason than to avoid having to help to carry some forms that were required at the latter.

A commanding officer of my acquaintance had for some time been bothered by a soldier who vacillated between the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian persuasions. As the man seemed

to be very little persuaded about any of them, my friend said to him: "To give you an opportunity of quite making up your mind upon this important subject, you will attend all three services until you do so." The hours for the services happening to suit, the man was marched to all three on the next Sunday. A single Sunday like this was enough to make him give his exclusive adherence to one of these persuasions though which it was that received his final patronage I quite forget.

CHAPTER XIX

PRAYING SOLDIERS

THE German soldier is supplied with a small devotional book in which are prayers for the different circumstances in which the exigencies of the service may place him. The compilers of the Church of England Prayer Book have been almost equally considerate to our sailors, for they gave "a prayer to be said before a fight at sea," "prayers to be used in storms," and "short prayers for single persons that cannot meet to join in prayer with others, by reason of the fight or storm."

No such provision has been made for our soldiers, and, as a consequence, some curious prayers have been offered up by them. If even a bishop has been known to pray less spiritually than he ought, what can be expected of Private Thomas Atkins when going into action? Bishop Leslie,

"the fighting bishop," before a battle in Ireland prayed: "O God, for our unworthiness we are not fit to claim Thy help; but if we are bad our enemies are worse, and if Thou seest not meet to help us, we pray Thee help them not, but stand Thou neuter this day, and leave it to the arm of flesh."

Compare with this the supplication which an officer offered before one of the battles for Hungarian independence in 1849: "I will not ask Thee, Lord, to help us, and I know Thou wilt not help the Austrians; but if Thou wilt sit on yonder hill, Thou shalt not be ashamed of Thy children." Cromwell's faith in prayer and his soldier's Bible are well known, but there was one of his followers who was not blessed with faith. He, poor man, is said to have thus prayed before an engagement: "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul."

Sir Jacob Astley was present at the battle of Edgehill (1642), and his name has been handed down to us as having said this prayer before the battle began: "O Lord! Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do

not Thou forget me!" And then, advancing with his men to the charge, he cried out in cheerful tones: "Come on, boys!" —which they did, and with an enthusiasm that their opponents sadly felt.

Even in the reign of Charles II. the articles of war prescribed that daily prayers should be read to soldiers, and in Marlborough's wars the chaplains were said by the authorities to have done good service by praying for and with their military flocks.

Some Scotch regiments have been "powerfully prayerful," and this explains to a large extent their terrible efficiency in battle. The old 93rd Highlanders was a regular Highland parish with its own minister and two sergeants acting as elders. Holy Communion was taken before engagements, and the plate used is now kept in the sergeants' mess as a relic of those days. When King Edward observed the Scots kneeling before the fight at Bannockburn, he exclaimed: "See, they kneel, the rebels are asking pardon!" D'Umphraville replied, "Yes, but it is to the King of kings." Oh, that it might be said of us in our warfare against evil passions and desires what was

said of a celebrated Cameronian regiment: "They prayed as they fought, and fought as they prayed; they might be slain, never conquered; they were ready, whenever their duty or their religion called them, with undaunted spirit and great vivacity of mind, to endure hardships, attempt great enterprises, despise dangers, and bravely rush to death or victory."

It is, perhaps, not what we should expect, that men whose business in life is battle, and who give orders that cause the death of thousands, should be religious, but so it is. What would Cromwell, Havelock, Gordon, Stonewall Jackson, Moltke, only to mention names that occur to every one —what would these men have been without religion? It was at Havelock's Bible readings and prayer meetings that his "saints," as they were sneeringly called, learned to be ready for duty when others were incapacitated through drink. Like Cromwell's "Ironsides," they were strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Gordon used to hang a handkerchief outside his tent when engaged in prayer, and when this signal was displayed no one ventured to bring business which

they may have thought more important to his notice.

The great American general, Stonewall Jackson, was a devout man before, but the Civil War made him still more devout. His negro servant said that he always knew when there was going to be a battle, because his master got up so many times in the night to pray. When Jackson was riding to battle and spoke not a word, his lips were observed to move in prayer. And the religion which made the leader as unmoved in action as a stone wall, pervaded the army under his command. Those who passed through their encampments saw here and there soldiers kneeling round their camp fires, and heard their simple but fervent prayers.

The following little prayer, we are told, was frequently used by Moltke, who, as everybody knows, was one of the greatest generals of modern times: "Lord, teach us to think that we must die, that we may be wise."

In the Seven Years' War, the Prussian troops under Frederick the Great, on the morning of the battle of Leuthen, 5th December 1757, sang this verse of

Heerman's hymn, "O God, Thou faithful God":—

"And grant me, Lord, to do,
With ready heart and willing,
Whate'er thou shalt command,
My calling here fulfilling;
And do it when I ought,
With all my strength, and bless
The work I thus have wrought,
For Thou must give success."

An officer of the king asked if he wished the soldiers to be silenced. "No," replied Frederick; "with such men God will surely give me to-day the victory." He was not disappointed; the Prussians fought bravely, and in three hours the greatly-outnumbering forces of the Austrians were defeated, when the king is said to have exclaimed: "My God, what a power religion is!" Nor is this power unappreciated by the rulers of the army of modern Germany. Chaplains are maintained and military churches provided, in which Parade Services are held, and, amongst Protestants, the Holy Communion celebrated two or three times a year. Before these rare celebrations the chaplains talk very earnestly to the men about the special temptations of their lives, and one chaplain whom I met lately at

Berlin, told me that out of sixteen hundred men in his spiritual charge, as many as a thousand, or even more, communicated.

When in Germany one officer's guard relieves another, they perform certain evolutions and then present arms to each other. This done, at a word of command the men bow their heads, put their hands to their helmets, and at least pretend to pray that God would guard the guard. At sundown I believe the soldiers engage in a sort of official evening prayer. These forms may not be worth much in themselves, but they remind the soldiers of things that are of value.

It is a trial to a religious soldier to have to live his life in a crowd. He can seldom be alone or get away from his comrades. One time, however, he has which is very favourable to prayer and meditation, and that is when he is on sentry. As he paces up and down on a beautiful moonlit night in a tropical country, where the stars shine out more brightly than in the denser atmosphere of his native land, even a thoughtless man, looking every few nights on those shining worlds, would surely sometimes ask himself, the whence and the whither of his life.

On one occasion an aide-de-camp blundered in upon Washington while he knelt in prayer. The father of his country rose and rebuked the young man by throwing the scabbard of his sword at his head. If a man in Washington's position was interrupted in his prayers and found the interruption troublesome, what must it be to a private soldier to pray in a barrack-room full of noisy, jeering companions. To do so requires as much courage as gaining a Victoria Cross, but it is sometimes done.

Talking to his chaplain a recruit said: "Last night in the barrack-room before going to bed, I knelt down and prayed. Very soon boots were thrown at me, and there was much laughter."

"Well," said the chaplain, "but suppose you defer your prayers until you get into bed, and then lift up your heart to God!"

A week or two afterwards the chaplain and the young soldier meeting, the former said: "You took my advice, I suppose? How has it worked?"

"Sir," answered the soldier, "I did take your advice for one or two nights, but I began to think it looked rather like denying my Saviour, and I once more knelt down

and prayed by the side of my cot as before."

"And what followed?"

"Not one of them laughs now, sir, and some of them kneel and pray too."

"I felt ashamed of the advice I had given," said the chaplain who related the matter. "That young fellow was both wiser and braver than myself."

Could anything be more truly Christian than this action of another praying soldier which the writer had from a chaplain who learned it from one of our bishops? At a soldier who was kneeling beside his cot praying, some one threw a very dirty boot. When the man had finished, he got up, polished the boot, and, bringing it to the owner who had thrown it, said: "If you will give me the other I will clean it too."

"Well, how does your brother like the Artillery?" I asked not long ago a man whose brother had received from me the clergyman's recommendation which must be obtained before a boy can enlist.

"Very well," replied the man, "and he looks so smart in his uniform."

My next question was whether there

were any other boys in the fort from the same place.

"Yes, sir," was the reply, "there is one, and he must have been well brought up, and is a really plucky little chap. The first night, my brother says, that he came into the barrack-room, when the others were all laughing and chaffing, the youngster quietly knelt down and began to say his prayers. Seeing this, a big boy stepped up to him and said: "Who told you to do that?" "My mother told me," was the reply. He did not get red or look confused, or tell a lie, but brought it out—'My mother told me'—quite naturally."

"What did the big boy do?" I inquired.

"He was delighted with the young fellow's pluck, and told him that what he did was right, and that if any one interfered with him when at his prayers, he would give him a good hiding."

Only the other day a brother chaplain showed to me the photograph of a soldier whom he had been enabled to influence for good. "That man," he remarked, "says his prayers in the barrack-room, and his example has induced eleven of his room mates to do the same."

It is possible, however, that there may not be as much difficulty in this matter as some would have us believe. Certainly two men who have lived in barrack-rooms and who have published their experience, tell us that soldiers do not interfere with one another about any religious habit they have formed.

The author of *The Queen's Service* thus writes :—

"Although a soldier is never really persecuted in any way for his religious tendencies, he is always rather despised for making a display of them. This is often entirely his own fault. If he would only prove himself to his comrades to be as good as themselves at 'soldiering'—*i.e.*, smart and clean in appearance and good at drill, &c.—his religious observances would be held by them to be entirely his own affair. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case, and the 'psalm-singers' of a battalion are too often more renowned for their proficiency in 'knee-drill' than in their more strictly military exercises. The most blackguardly canteen loafer is often their superior in these respects."

But where religion is genuine, it has influenced, and is respected in the barrack-room as the same author goes on to acknowledge :

"On our return to Dublin at the end of this month I was extremely glad to find that there were several men

in my new room who, in the language of the street preacher, had 'got salvation.' Their influence was certainly a good one, and checked in some measure the usual flow of filthy language. Those whose religion was something more than a veneer did a great deal of good by the sheer force of their example."

CHAPTER XX

GENTLEMEN PRIVATES

I COME across many gentlemen privates, and as I know how much they are in need of a change from the barrack-room and its surroundings, I invite occasionally to my house those who care to come. Very instructive, to me at least, were the chats I have had after supper on Sunday evenings with these young men who have been unable to get into the army as officers in the usual way.

In one infantry regiment I personally knew fourteen gentlemen privates, although the regiment was by no means a "crack" one. Not long ago I was looking at some cavalry recruits learning to ride. "Those fellows are a great nuisance," the riding-master remarked, as he pointed out to me one lad who was the son of a general, another the son of a judge, two the sons

Photo] CLEANING LEATHER GEAR. [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

of colonels, and two the hopefuls of clergymen. "They are a nuisance because they enlist only for a few weeks, give no end of trouble, and are then bought out by their friends." Of course, in the ranks of the army, as everywhere else, many affect to come of aristocratic parentage who are anything but gentlemen. "I never knew what it was to brush my own clothes till I came into the army," said one of these impostors with great *hauteur*. His comrades soon began to speak of him as a "high and mighty snob," and none of us were surprised when it was discovered that he had been dismissed from a gentleman's service, and that in his capacity of valet he had been accustomed to brush his master's clothes, if he had never brushed his own.

It is a mistake to suppose that dissipation, gambling, and idleness are always the causes of the enlistment of a gentleman. Quite as often it is the hope of gaining a commission which, because he had not been well grounded at school, or because his father could not afford to keep him long enough at a "crammer's," he failed to obtain by competitive examination. "Most of us,"

said a gentleman private to me, "have been plucked in spelling." Imagine the feelings of a father, after paying from one to two hundred pounds a year, first at a preparatory, and afterwards at a fashionable public school, on finding that his son cannot write a piece of dictation, and as a consequence, can only earn one shilling a day as a private soldier! Verily, some of our upper class schools are frauds.

After so many young officers have been killed, there are now a sad number of vacancies, but men from the ranks will not be put into many of them. In time of peace, at least, the number of commissions got in this way, exclusive of those of quartermasters and riding-masters, does not average more than twelve or fifteen in the year, and these generally go to men who have much interest, and can put pressure on the authorities.

As a rule, the only commissions that are given to men who have neither money nor influential friends, are those of quartermasters, riding-masters, and for gunners, and engineers, commissions in the coast brigade and in the coast defence submarine mining corps.

If, however, a young man have some private means, with the manners of a gentleman, if he can get an introduction to his colonel,[1] obtain a first-class certificate in the regimental school, have a good character, know his drill, and—this above all—if he can get the recommendation of his commanding officer, backed by friends at the War Office, he probably will get a commission, but not before he has waited for it about six years.

And certainly during these years his bed will not be one of rose-leaves. Cavalry recruiting sergeants used to say to the "greenhorns" whom they wished to enlist, "You will all be gentlemen, and have nothing to do but ride about on a horse of your own, and if you are lucky you will have two horses." Recruits are not so easily caught now, but there are many who enlist without counting the cost, or knowing what the real life of a soldier is. It is by no means the magnificently gay

[1] One commanding officer thus spoke when asked about a young gentleman enlisting in his regiment: "Oh, another of those confounded gentlemen soldiers! I would not have them at any price; they are more trouble than they are worth. Tell him that he can go to blazes, if he likes, as long as he keeps out of my battalion."

life, with nothing to do and plenty of jolly fellows to help you to do it, that some young men who languish on office stools suppose. And we must warn these imaginative youths from giving up any respectable employment they may have, in the vain hope of getting a commission. The number of gentlemen privates now in the ranks is so great, that Government can only supply a very small proportion of them with commissions.

Many a gentleman private who talks of getting a commission in a few months, is quite unfit to be even a lance-corporal. He may be steady and well enough educated, but he may have no power of managing men. As there are scholars who cannot teach school because they have not enough personal influence to maintain discipline, so a soldier who has become a non-commissioned officer will soon lose his stripes if he cannot make the men obey him.

The gentleman private who is ambitious, is much pleased when he gets the "skater," or chevron of a lance-corporal, but the ordinary Tommy is frequently unwilling to take it. It is, he thinks, the first step to either a court-martial or a commission,

and that in his case the former destination would be the more probable one. And indeed this first step on the ladder of promotion does cost, for it brings with it much work and worry.

When I came into the army, I was struck with the fact that every one in command had some one, if not to do his work, at least to share it and the responsibility connected with it. For fear a general might be overworked, an adjutant-general is provided who has many assistants. A colonel is helped by his adjutant, a captain by his subalterns, the latter by a colour-sergeant. Sergeants have corporals to run for them, and they in turn have lance-corporals, but for the poor lancer no one will do anything, while he has to do everything for every one. The lance-Jack has not to work with his *hands* as he had when a private, but his *feet* are always on the go, taking messages, marching small parties of men, doing gate duty, and generally being at the beck and call of his superiors. If anything extra has to be done, it is always thought that the lance-corporal should be the doer of it.

But though the authority with which one

stripe dresses a man is little and often brief in duration, it sometimes causes him to be rather puffed up. One of the men belonging to the company of a newly-fledged, or rather newly-striped lance-corporal asked: "When do you want me to draw rations, Smith?"

"Who are you talking to?" demanded the lancer angrily. "Don't forget to say *Corporal* when you speak to me. I've a handle to my name now."

"All right, old man, don't lose your whiskers if you have. A ration-tin has got two, and it's not half as conceited about it," replied the other. The speaker was given by the colonel fourteen days' imprisonment for "insolence to a non-commissioned officer," but the lance-corporal got a hint not to stand too much on his dignity.

Some lance-corporals go to the other extreme, and are too shy about exercising their new authority over their old comrades. The gentleman private who is working for a commission, must avoid these opposite errors. Much tact and patience will be needed to make him a success in his first step of promotion, but it is an

opportunity to show what is in him, and he can console himself by thinking that when he gets the lance-corporal apprenticeship over, he will have passed the roughest part of the road through the ranks to a commission.

It is not difficult to discover a gentleman private though dressed like the other men. When I see a man in hospital with a tooth-brush I suspect. The wearing of spring-sided boots instead of ammunition ones may furnish a clue. As a rule, gentlemen do not swear, but sometimes "language" will slip out, and then it is of a different kind from that of the common or garden Tommy. It respects the aspirate, and is profane without being obscene.

Some gentlemen, as we said, enlist in hopes of getting a commission, others because they dislike all the other professions, and have no private means to become officers, others because they have got into a row at a university or because things are not going on smoothly at their homes; but there are some who do so for what they call a "lark." Alas! the lark does not soar so high or sing so merrily when it takes the form of officers' mess fatigues,

of scrubbing barrack-room floors, of carrying coal, of grooming horses, of burnishing chains and scabbards (for the lark generally flies into a cavalry barracks), of polishing long boots, and the other pomps and vanities that make the lot of a horse-soldier appear desirable to outsiders.

Nor must a gentleman private expect to be treated by the non-commissioned officers with greater respect than other Tommies. He may, when in a batch of recruits he has a first interview with the sergeant-major, hear an address like the following, which a gentleman private has put on record: "Now then, you youngsters, you want to be soldiers, and by the grace of God and punishment drill I'll turn you out so. Now, bear in mind that you're always to do exactly what you're told, whether you like it or not—you probably won't like it at all, but that won't matter in the least. If you happen to think that the service is all beans and bacon, you're making a mistake that's as big as the bull's eye on a first-class target. It's a damned hard life at the start, and it rests with yourself if it's to continue so. Another thing: don't make too many friends—they'll be always wanting to borrow your money and smoke your

baccy. I hope you're going in for promotion, but don't be disappointed if you're not made colour-sergeant in a week. You won't get the colours, or anything else, until you're fit for them. Keep yourselves clean, and be as smart as Providence will permit you, and you'll get on all right. None of your damned cockney monkey-tricks here, d'ye understand?"

But though the army is not, as the sergeant-major says, "all lavender," it is better than the life lived by many gentlemen in the Colonies. It is a healthy, manly life, and may be recommended to young men who have not got any tolerably satisfactory occupation. For myself, I would much rather be a private soldier than a mere quill driver or behind a counter trying to please ladies in the matter of gloves and leg-sleeves. The army is a school of discipline so good that it would be well if nearly all the youth of the country were passed through it.

Even if a man never get a commission, there are positions in the army better than that of a clerk, or of an unsuccessful professional man. The number of promotions to commissioned, warrant, and non-commissioned ranks, and of appointments in the

military departments open to soldiers amounts to over 35,000, or about one-sixth of the total strength of the army. Soldiering is perhaps the only business where a steady capable man can get a pension, that is to say a certain provision for life when he is forty years of age. If a man have no private money he is better off as a warrant or even non-commissioned officer than he would be if he were to obtain a commission. It may be said of many a position open to non-commissioned officers what the man said of the pig he had killed, that there is a great deal of "miscellaneous eating" about it. The pay is not large, but the perquisites and indirect advantages are considerable. This is especially the case in India, which is a land of promise to a young soldier without money, if he be steady and learn one or more of the native languages.

If a young gentleman had made up his mind to enlist in hopes of gaining a commission, and were to ask for advice—what young men of the period seldom do—I would say to him: "Go into the most commonplace and least 'crack' infantry regiment you can find, for there your chance will be greatest. Do

not 'put on side,' or hold yourself severely aloof, but only consort with the best of your comrades. Never accept a billet which takes you away from the eyes of your officers on the parade-ground. Learn all you can except evil, and get as many certificates as possible. Keep your person and accoutrements always neat, and acquire that quality to which commanding officers give an almost mystical meaning and superstitious reverence—'smartness.' Learn to hold your tongue, and endeavour to realize that you have to give implicit obedience, to pay proper respect, not to an individual who gives an order, but to the discipline that often obnoxious and sometimes unjust individual represents. Do not allow yourself to be laughed out of either your money or your religion. Have patience, and do not ask your friends to torment the authorities until you have been a sergeant for some time. Beware of drink and women:—

"And she has hair of a golden hue,
Take care;
And what she says it is not true,
Beware, beware!
Trust her not—
She is fooling thee."

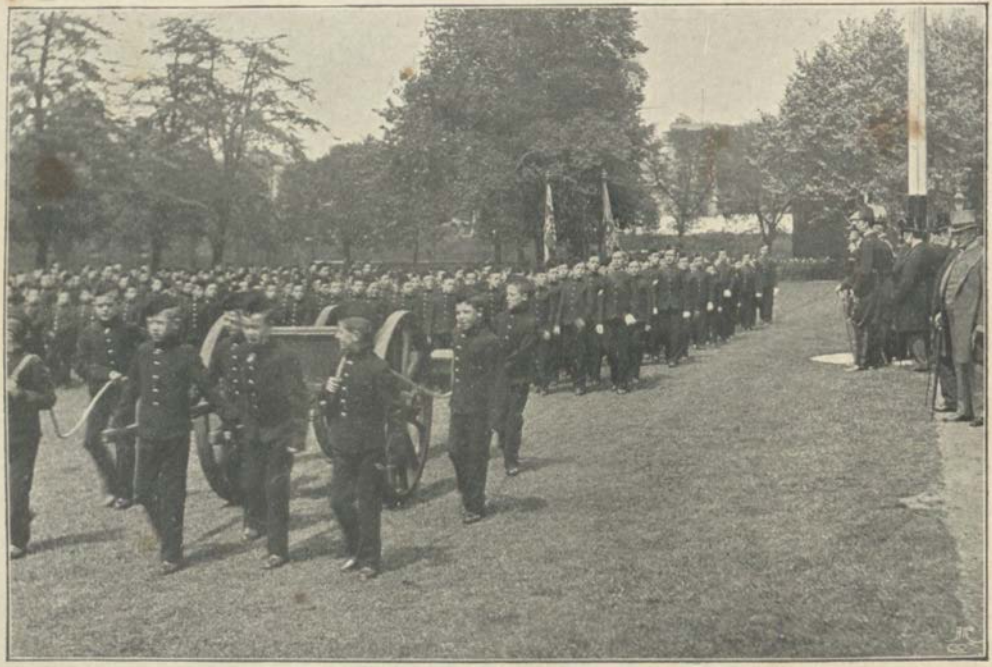
CHAPTER XXI

THOMAS ATKINS, JUNIOR

THERE are many institutions in the English Army that are peculiar to it, and to be found in no other army. One of these is the enlistment of boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, to serve as buglers, drummers, band-boys, or to learn a trade in a regimental workshop.

The life of a boy in the army is full of temptations, but they are probably neither greater nor more numerous than are those of a public school, and certainly a fair proportion of these very young soldiers turn out well, becoming generals and colonels, and, what is best of all, good men.

In most corps the boys have a barrack-room to themselves, so that they may associate as little as possible with the men. When they do live with the men they are liable to learn bad language, drinking, smok-



Photo] [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66, Chancery Lane.*

DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL
Annual Inspection by Commander-in-Chief.

ing, and, in a word, all adult vices. This renders them mannish, but it certainly does not make men of them as foolish boys fancy.

A man is sometimes wicked enough to give a band or drummer-boy drink in order to make him talk "old-fashioned." Most men, however, even though they may not be good themselves, think that the boys should be different. I was much impressed by this fact on one occasion. Two boys had been confirmed, and had on the Sunday after come to the Holy Communion. I asked them if the men had tried in any way to prevent them doing so. "No one," they replied, "said anything to vex us, and one chap told us that we ought to go, and that if any one laughed at us, he would give him beans." While on this subject I may mention that when I was in one garrison, the only private soldiers that were communicants were three band-boys. It required considerable moral courage for them, in this way, to act differently from the rest.

Once a week enlisted boys receive from a chaplain religious instruction, and very troublesome they sometimes make themselves, especially when boys of two or three regiments are instructed together. Here is

an instance. A chaplain having asked his boys some very simple questions, they professed an amount of ignorance that was impossible. Among other questions he asked, "Who is God?" and was assured by all that they had never heard of Him. This answer being reported, the commanding officer of the boy who gave it taught him that impudently feigned ignorance is not bliss.

It is better, however, to trust to a combination of firmness and kindness than to be continually reporting boys. When the lads first come to me I say, "If you make this duty easy for me, I shall make it easy for you. If you keep quiet and answer questions as quickly and well as you can, you will get away sooner, and I shall give a good account of you to the commanding officer. Then there will be a treat in winter for good boys, and probably a day's outing in summer."

But even if a chaplain do not succeed in getting much religious instruction into these boys, the opportunity he has every week of talking to them may be put to good account. He gets to understand them (if it be possible to understand a boy), he can talk or read to them of

noble deeds that may urge them to move upward, he can warn them against the danger of "gutter literature," and induce them to buy each month *The Boy's Own Paper* and other wholesome publications.

I remember taking the boys of two regiments and of an Artillery depôt, fifty-seven in all, from Plymouth in a steamer to the end of the beautiful river Tamar. We had tea in the old-fashioned garden of a flower-covered cottage. It was amusing to notice how the gunner-boys dressed in blue kept to themselves and did not associate much with their brothers-in-arms who wore red. After tea the boys adjourned to a large field, in which were swings and other arrangements for their amusement. Nothing, however, proved as attractive to the Artillery boys as some green apples in an adjoining orchard. These they feloniously abstracted and ate, an act which for some of them carried its own punishment.

Before tea, and during the meal, the blue and red boys looked at one another with dignified suspicion, and seemed to think that the honour of their respective arms of the service required that they

should keep aloof from each other. At length, however, they began to fraternise, and on the return journey they joined in getting up a sing-song, which seemed to greatly amuse the civilian passengers.

The boys were in high spirits and full of fun, but they never for a moment forgot themselves or behaved rudely to any one. Some lady friends of mine who accompanied the expedition were greatly pleased with their good manners.

Another thing must be said in praise of army boys, and that is that they are very kind and considerate to each other. There is no bullying, and a recruit is treated much better than a new boy at most schools. When one of those Artillery boys whom I have mentioned was absent from dinner or tea, the others did not eat his share, but put it carefully aside for him; and if a boy were out on pass when the others went to bed, they did not make an "apple pie" bed for him, but took his bed down from the folds, in which it was folded up during the day-time, and settled it comfortably.

Still I am far from saying that army boys are immaculate. Some of them drink

and smoke in imitation of men, and when caught have a curious ambition, and that is to be punished as men. If a boy be sentenced to punishment cells he will probably think that he is a fine fellow, and the foolish ones amongst the other boys will share his opinion. Knowing this to be the case, a wise commanding officer will order a bad boy to be caned by the sergeant-drummer. An Artillery boy was lately punished in a way that to people not acquainted with the army sounds strange. When a boy's much-wished-for eighteenth year arrives he is officially considered a man. About a week after attaining the army rank of man or full gunner, the lad of whom we are thinking committed some breach of discipline. So it came out, in orders, that "Gunner —— is reduced to the rank of boy." A wonderful physical performance — a man reduced to a boy by an army order!

At my last station, in order to induce enlisted boys to sing in the choir of the evening service, we gave one penny a week to those who attended the choir practice, and twopence to those who came to, and behaved well at, the voluntary

evening service. This arrangement, however, did not work well, for the young rogues came to the service but not to the practice. We then gave twopence for the practice, and one penny for the service, which made matters worse, for they came to the former and not to the latter, for which the former was, of course, only preparatory. The third arrangement was to give one penny for the practice, and threepence to each boy who attended both. This, together with an order from the colonel that the boys were to attend the evening service, settled the matter. The order might have been enough without any payment, only that, as one little fellow, who was what soldiers call a "lawyer," remarked, while the colonel could force them to attend the service, no one could make them sing correctly against their wishes.

Boys in the army wear the uniform of the corps to which they are attached, but those in the band have more braid and buttons. They may speak with a groan of the number of buttons when they have to clean them, but they rather like them when they walk out on a Sunday afternoon.

The pay of a boy is from 4*d.* to 8*d.* a day, according to his attainments. This last amount of pocket money is obtained when he becomes a full band-boy, bugler, or drummer. A boy can also add to his income by virtue. When there has been no regimental entry in his defaulter's sheet for two years he gets a good conduct stripe of braid on his arm, and for every such "ring" he receives a penny a day. To do them justice, the boys do not all of them waste this money. They keep some of it for the six weeks' furlough they get at Christmas, and one little drummer I know often sends a pound to his mother. Boys are enlisted at the age of fourteen for twelve years. They are taken at this early age because it is easier then to learn the bugle, with its hundreds of calls, the drum, that requires such suppleness of wrist, and other instruments all more or less difficult.

One bad result comes from employing very young boys in the army, and that is that their constitutions are not able to endure the trying climates which are sometimes met with on foreign stations. I used to be

greatly pained when stationed at Malta to see boys suffering from the insidious fever of that place. In India, they are sent to the hills whenever they become ill; but they are sometimes naturally very sorry for themselves when at their early age they have to leave their friends and join a draft going to the far East, about which they have heard many tales not to its advantage. The brave little fellows put a manly face on it, but in spite of their love of adventure, Old England at the moment of departure seems to be good enough for them. On active service, too, the boys have to take their chance with the rest. One boy I knew had a terrible experience in Burmah. He had foolishly strayed away from the camp, and a party of Dacoits caught him, tied him to a tree, and cut off the fingers of both his hands.

Some stories about boys in our army are well known. Who has not heard of the little English drummer, who, when made a prisoner and brought before Napoleon, was told to beat "retreat"? The boy replied that he had never learned that beat, as the English never require it. A better authenticated tale is that which

records how, during one of the battles of the Crimea, Thomas Keep, a drummer-boy of the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards, was observed going about of his own accord, and without being ordered, giving tea, which he had made himself, to wounded men amidst a shower of bullets.

Talking lately to a friend of mine, an officer who served in the last New Zealand War, he told me an incident which so much impressed me that I asked him to write it down for me. He did so, and sent it in a letter as follows:—

"The 58th Regiment (now the 2nd Battalion of the Northampton) were at one period of the war encamped in a clearing surrounded by dense bush. One dark night when all the lights were out, except in the quarter and rear guard tents, and all were asleep except those on guard, a band of Maories, as the aborigines of New Zealand call themselves, crept up to the second guard, and springing on the sentry, killed him with a tomahawk. A drummer-boy on guard, hearing the noise and guessing the cause, began to sound the alarm, but was immediately attacked by one of the natives, who, with his tomahawk,

chopped off the hand which held the bugle. The gallant little fellow, nothing daunted, snatched up his bugle with his uninjured hand, and raising it to his lips, just had time to sound sufficient of the notes of the alarm to rouse the entire camp before his brave young life was dashed out of him by a terrific blow from another tomahawk. The regiment was by this time thoroughly aroused, and after some difficulty in the dark, drove off the assailants."

In the Abyssinian War, of thirty years ago, a drummer-boy attached to the 33rd Regiment performed one of the most remarkable deeds of bravery of which there is any record. The regiment had fought its way up a steep and rocky path, through ambushed enemies, until it reached the walls of Magdala, King Theodore's stronghold.

By a strange oversight, the regiment had forgotten to bring powder with which to make a breach in the wall.

At this crisis a young drummer-boy called out to a tall Irishman who was trying in vain to scale the wall, "Give me a lift up." In a few seconds the boy was

safely at the top of the wall and, although exposed to a terrible fire, was helping his lifter to the same position. Thus by slow degrees the entire regiment surmounted the wall, but the drummer-boy was the first to face the enemy within the stronghold.

We have all read of "Little Redbreast," the pet of the 5th Lancers, who killed three Boers at Elandslaagte. Of this trumpeter, John James Shurlock, his mother wrote, "He is a brave, good, and generous son."

The boys of a cavalry regiment who attended my religious instruction had been reading of this youthful hero, so the next time in the Catechism I asked one of them what was his duty to his neighbour, adding, "—suppose he be a Boer?" The boy replied solemnly but firmly, "to shoot him, sir."

CHAPTER XXII

ON BOARD A TRANSPORT

THE *Crocodile*, *Euphrates*, *Malabar*, *Orontes*, *Himalaya*, *Tamar*, and other troop-ships, in most of which I have had passages, have now given place to "hired transports," much to the comfort of Mr Atkins. That gentleman, especially when sea-sick, could not but feel irritated at the way the officers and blue-jackets of the troopships who belonged to the Royal Navy, and who wished to impress the fact upon soldiers, used to order him about. They spoke to him in a way it would be improper to address a black-beetle, and told him that he must not go here or must not go there, and that whatever he was doing he was doing it in the wrong place, and at the wrong time, and that it was infinitely condescending of them to take as a passenger at all a land-lubber like him,

Photo] ON BOARD A TRANSPORT. [*G. W. Roche, Dublin*

who disgraced creation. On hired transports, the officers and lascars being supplied by their owners, Tommy is treated almost civilly.

Nor has he as much swabbing decks, hauling ropes, watch duty, or work of any kind to do, as he had on the troopers. This, however, is a questionable advantage, for there is no better cure for sea-sickness than hard work. I know this from experience. One Sunday, on board a trooper, I was suffering dreadfully from sea-sickness, and looked forward to the Parade Service with dread. However, I was more afraid of confessing that I was unable to officiate at it, and determined to make an attempt. Propping myself up against a mast I began, while the ship performed the antics of a drunkard, and groaned like a monster in pain. Very soon I felt perfectly well, and preached better than I generally do on *terra firma*. Nothing like forgetting one's-self.

The order and regularity that prevail in hired transports, are not less than they were in the troop-ships. And, of course, this must be the case where up to two thousand men may be accommodated. It

has been said that a ship is "a prison with a chance of being drowned," and certainly the rules and regulations of a troop-ship are scarcely fewer than those of a prison. Mr Atkins, however, does not object to this, when he knows that nearly all these rules were framed by experienced people for the comfort not of one, but of all on board, and that discipline could not be maintained if individuals were allowed to do what they liked.

Transports may be compared to gigantic hold-alls, which contain everything from a needle to an anchor, and everything in a place that has been cunningly devised for it. There are on board workshops for carpenters, blacksmiths, and other tradesmen; bakeries, butchers' shops, and canteens; stalls for horses, places for dogs, receiving-rooms for hammocks, arms, helmets, and spare tackle of all kinds. Then the number of sheep, poultry, rabbits, and all varieties of live stock that are taken to be killed on each voyage is a very large one. In fact, our great troop-ships are nothing less than floating towns.

The saloon and the cabins of the higher officers, the ladies' cabin, for their wives,

and the nursery for their children, are very comfortable, but the young officers generally grumble at the heat and crowded state of "Pandemonium" where they live. The quarters of non-commissioned officers and their families, will not be complained of by those who reflect that it is impossible to make people as comfortable at sea as on shore.

The troop-decks are rough places, but absolutely luxurious compared with what used to be the accommodation for soldiers, when they went to India in sailing vessels round the Cape. The troops are divided into messes, and to each mess is assigned a certain portion of space, where they take their meals on hanging movable tables during the day, and sleep at night. To each man is given a hammock, but the majority, not being expert in getting into these, especially when sea-sick, prefer to lie on the decks. It is difficult at night to pick one's steps over the long rows of sleeping figures. Imagine the place during the first two days of a rough journey when half the men are ill!

At such times the ship's rations are not very alluring. The amount of food supplied

to soldiers at sea is much the same as on land, but of a different kind. One day the dinner consists of salt pork and "duff," another day of canned or, what is better liked, frozen meat, another of boiled beef and soup. This last dinner looks very well, and I heard one man say, "Well, that is good soup, and no mistake;" but it does not increase one's appetite to see food cooked in such quantities. Hundreds of nets full of beef ready to be distributed to the different messes are too suggestive of feeding-time at the "Zoo." As a sort of make-up to the men, a pint of porter or an equivalent in tobacco or tea and sugar is given to each of them. Ship's biscuit appears at every meal, but those who are afraid of breaking their teeth upon it can buy "soft tommy," which means fresh bread.

It is impossible to find work for all soldiers on board a troop-ship, but the more they have to do the better it is for them. At 5 A.M. the orderly-bugler sounds *réveille*. A quarter of an hour later, each man gives his blanket and hammock rolled up into store, where they remain until they are issued again at 6.30 P.M. After with difficulty getting a wash themselves, the

men in each mess clean up the portion of deck for which they are responsible. Breakfast over, all except orderly-men and cooks go on the upper deck in order that the troop-deck below may be prepared for the inspection of the captain of the ship.

There is a muster parade at 10 A.M., at which the doctor in charge generally inspects the men. Then there are watches, guards, and sentry duties to be performed. Prisoners are told off, orders issued, and much the same routine gone through that is usual in barracks. At 12.30 P.M. and 4 P.M. dinner and tea come as pleasant breaks. At eight o'clock "First Post" is sounded, and the orderly sergeants call roll. At nine there is the bugle call, "Lights out."

The first day he is at sea Tommy is afraid that he is going to die, the second, he is afraid that he is not going to do so. But to whatever misery sea-sickness may reduce him the first two or three days of a voyage, after that he grows quite frisky. He can listen to a song, or even sing one, and can take a hand at cards. Very glad, too, he is to be able to renew intimacy with his old friend the pipe, but this can only be done at the hours when a bugle sounds

"Commence firing." "Cease firing" means pipes out.

On long voyages the troops are exercised in such drills as "Prepare to abandon ship" (in boats), "Man overboard," "Fire," etc. Every man learns his place, and gets into it in a very short time indeed. On one occasion I saw a poor lady become quite excited as she looked on at the last-named drill. She could not understand that it was only make-believe, as the children say, and ran about asking which boat she was to get into.

When a man does fall overboard, or when, to practise the men, one is supposed to do so, the first thing done is to throw over a life-belt to which is attached a quantity of a curious substance that burns and makes a bright light in the water. By means of this light the man overboard can see the belt if the accident happens at night-time, and the crew of the boat that is immediately lowered find the place where he fell and have light to pick him up. Anything more offensive, however, than this substance that burns in water I never smelt. Almost better to be drowned, I

thought, than to have to smell much of that.

For the convenience of their work and to save their ordinary clothes, soldiers are given when at sea a special kit.

But there is play as well as work on board a transport. Entertainments are got up which are attended by all, including the officers and ladies from the saloon. Then the band of whatever regiment is on board enlivens the deck for an hour or two in the morning, when it practises, and also plays during the saloon dinner-hour. It is awkward, however, when, as sometimes happens, there is an unintentional "lost chord," owing to sea-sick bandsmen having to retreat.

Of course there are the usual deck quoits, cricket, and other games. For myself, I preferred to anything else, talking to men who had experience of places and people one wanted to know about. A transport affords unrivalled opportunities for this. The run of the ship and the hour and day when she will get to her destination form a standing subject of conversation and, I may add, occasion for gambling by those who are not wise enough to think that the

man who does not bet is better than a better.

The last passage I took in a transport was from Malta to Alexandria, from that to Cyprus, and then to England. During the voyage three incidents occurred which forcibly brought to the minds of some of us the words, "In the midst of life we are in death."

We had not gone more than fifty miles from Malta when suddenly the vessel stopped, and we became aware that something was wrong, though what it was we did not know. For four hours there was no movement, at which we grumbled much, for we had hoped that we would have had time, during the ship's stay at Alexandria, to run up to Cairo by train and see the Pyramids. And yet if we had known what a narrow escape we had from seeing the bottom of the Mediterranean, we would not have thought ourselves so hardly used, merely because we had four hours' less time for seeing Cairo. We learned afterwards that one of the boilers had burst, which might have killed several men, blown a hole in the ship and sunk her. When one of the engineer officers explained this to me, I was

rather ashamed at my share in the grumbling about the four hours' delay.

At Alexandria a sergeant-major embarked, in apparently excellent health; but he was not well really, and in a little more than a week's time he died. The ship was stopped during the few minutes while his funeral was taking place. Never before had I seen a burial at sea, and the sight made a deep impression upon me. The band of the regiment on board played the "Dead March." The body was sewn up in a hammock and covered with the Union Jack, which served as a pall. It was carried to the place where it was to be dropped into the sea. I walked before, reading sentences from the Burial Service. A line of soldiers drawn up on the main-deck, and another on the hurricane deck, saluted with their rifles the procession as it passed. The body, placed on a broad inclined board, which rested on the gangway opening, was shot into the sea as I read the words: "We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body (when the sea shall give up her dead) and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; Who, at His coming,

shall change our vile body." The corpse sank like a stone, for two cannon-shots had been sewn up at the feet in the hammock. The regulation number of soldiers fired three volleys into the air, a custom which is said to have originated in a desire to honour the three Persons of the Trinity. Between each volley the buglers sounded the "Last Post" to the accompaniment of a roll on the drums. Then the band struck up a merry tune, to remind us that men on active service have no time for useless sorrow, but must immediately turn away from their dead comrade to the battle of life.

Talking of military funerals, I may say that there is generally great care taken to give every respect. The only place where there seemed to be an exception was at Netley Hospital, where I once saw a sergeant attending in yellow hospital slippers. There was, too, one of my own cloth in Malta who erred in the opposite extremity of his body. He went to a burial in a straw hat, which being reported, we commissioned chaplains were ordered to wear our uniform going to those ceremonies. We have often wondered why some soldiers are so fond of attending the funerals even of

those they did not know, and how Mrs Thomas Atkins can weep so loudly and copiously when present at the obsequies of those for whom she does not really grieve.

But to return to the funeral at sea. It seems more awful to sink a dead body into the sea than to put it into a grave. I fancy this is because after the horrid splash is heard there is no other sign of the place where we have consigned our friend. The waste of waters covers over the dear departed, the ship continues her way, and there is no place to tell where we have laid him.

As the troop-ship slowly steamed along the jetty on the day of our arrival at Portsmouth, the wife of the unfortunate man was recognised by one or two persons on board. There she was, a widow, who did not know that she was a widow, for the poor thing could not have heard that only three days before her husband had been taken away from herself and her children. She was laughing and talking in the midst of a circle of friends, little suspecting that she would hear news that would give her a terrible shock when in five minutes' time the gangway would be put down. Joy and

sadness, laughter and tears, are never far apart in this world. "In the midst of life we are in death."

But our voyage did not end until another sad incident had taken place. The chief steward of the ship committed suicide by jumping overboard when we were passing the Isle of Wight. Why did he commit this melancholy act just at the time when all others on board were rejoicing at the first sight of their native land? The only explanation his friends could think of was, that he had a very extravagant wife, who was in the habit of running up bills, and that he was afraid to face these on returning home. If this be the case, we have another illustration of the fact that persons are killed by thoughtless selfishness quite as much as by murderous malice. No doubt this wife would say, "I acted thoughtlessly. I never meant to do all this harm." Thoughtlessness, however, is no excuse. Indeed, it may be more harmful than wilful error, for that is limited by the will; but what limit is there to actions of which we are unconscious?

CHAPTER XXIII

FOREIGN SERVICE

WHEN military people land from a transport in the place where they are to do their foreign service, they are reminded of home by that familiar creature the British soldier. There he is on sentry, the same as ever, only that he now wears a white helmet.

English soldiers can make themselves at home when abroad much more readily than the soldiers of other nations. At Cairo they may be seen riding donkeys and camels as though they were to the manner born. As a rule, they treat the natives of the countries in which they are stationed well, and sometimes even manage to chum with them, while understanding only a word or two of their language. Every native is called "Joey" by soldiers, and every soldier is called "Johnny" by natives.

Commissioned chaplains never go to India, but I have always understood from Atkins that it is the best country for "soldiering." He says that he leads a "gentleman's life" there, with obsequious natives who do all fatigues and call him "Sahib."

The first foreign station with which I became acquainted was Halifax, Nova Scotia. Tommy looks very well there in his furs, and amuses himself skating, sleighing, and marrying. As regards the first accomplishment, no one is thought to be able to skate in those parts unless he can dance on the ice. Sleighing seemed to me to be an over-rated amusement, not unlike sitting in a cold bath ringing a bell. Sometimes marriage may be what an old bachelor said it is, a harmless amusement, but this it certainly is not when soldiers take to themselves "Blue-noses" (name given to Nova Scotia beauties), whom they cannot properly support.

From Halifax I went to the Bermuda Islands. If the whole three hundred and sixty-five of them, or whatever their number is, were put into one, Tommy

would not think much of it. There is, he says, "no life" in the place. Parades are light, a bit of garden can be procured, there are nice cedar boats, the ocean around is at its greatest depth, and when you take a header you feel that you are going down, so to speak, five miles; but then there is not any large town, and only that supplies in the estimation of too many "life."

For myself, I was more interested in Cyprus, where there used to be many soldiers. There sergeants could keep polo ponies, as they are very cheap, and even privates could afford the small hire of one for a ride. Landing once from a troop-ship, and wishing to go to the camp at Polimedia, I hired a pony for the afternoon. So ashamed was I of its miserable look and ragged saddle, that when I was introduced to the general officer commanding, I stood before it to try and hide it. But when I mounted how the creature did go! It would gallop every bit of the five or six miles, being accustomed to carry Thomas Atkins, when lively, to the camp.

I never saw grapes better or cheaper

than at Cyprus—an armful for the smallest coin. The wine of the country, too, is excellent, when not flavoured with resin, but most of our soldiers would only drink beer that came from England.

I wish they would do the same at Malta, and not patronise the "grog-shops" there as much as they do. The following inscription over the door of a "grog-shop" near where I lived, is for the benefit of soldiers and sailors. A rude daub represents a soldier and a sailor shaking hands; the soldier holds a bottle in his left hand, and is evidently inviting Jack to join him in a glass. Under the painting, Joe (as every Maltese is called) drops into poetry as follows:—

"Always happy,
Never sorry;
Pay to-day,
Trust to-morrow."

On the wall of another grog-shop is put up this modest advertisement:—

"Johnny Felici is a good man.
I sell what is pleasant to the eye
And comfortable to the stomak."

Eight years ago, there were too many of

these grog-shops. On one road, only two miles in length, which is much frequented by soldiers, there were no fewer than sixty of the traps, which catch even good men occasionally. The stuff sold in them, however "pleasant to the eye and comfortable to the stomak," is simply poison. The effect is as instantaneous as the "Cape Smoke" of South Africa. "Short fuse," Jack calls the decoction. The Maltese, as a rule, decline to drink the insidious mixture, and it is kept for the benefit of poor Jack and Tommy Atkins. "I only remember," says a naval officer, "having once seen a Maltese the worse for drink on board ship. Joe was engaged as a stoker.

"'You're drunk, sir; you're drunk,' shouted the skipper.

"'Sare,' replied Joe, 'suppose you drink as much as me, I tink you shall be dronk too.'"

One cannot see much of the way English people drink in Malta, without feeling that a man ought to be very particular about what he puts into his mouth, and what (words) he allows to come out of it. The less one drinks of anything in a hot

climate the better. People say, "You must not take the water, it's not good," but they are not equally careful to caution the unwary against other kinds of liquor.

Many people only come to Malta in the winter months to escape the cold of England, or to enjoy the gaiety of the large naval and military station. These hibernating people pity those who have to remain during the summer; but their pity is scarcely required, for there are those who consider the summer better, because more equable than the winter. There is at this time, too, vacation from "social events," by no means an unpleasant release to those who, having arrived at the harbour of matrimony, can rest on their oars. Of course, if people will keep a thermometer in each room, look at it every few minutes, and then pity themselves, they will begin to feel hot, and perhaps catch the much dreaded "fever"—every ailment from a bad temper to impecuniosity is in Malta called "the fever." On the other hand, if they would only try to accommodate themselves to a hot climate, instead of accommodating a hot climate to them, if hey would imitate the natives, and regu-

late their hours by the sun, and their food, drink, and clothes by common-sense, they might almost despise the thermometer.

I heard a very experienced army doctor say, that only fools get Maltese fever; and certainly it is often got by the foolish way young soldiers expose themselves to the sun. "Only fools, dogs, and Englishmen," say the Maltese, "stop in the sun."

> "When the 'arf-made recruit goes out to the East
> 'E acts like a babe an' 'e drinks like a beast,
> An' 'e wonders because 'e is frequent deceased."

This grim phrase, "frequent deceased," reminds me of a lugubrious chaplain to the forces at Malta. In the beginning of summer, when so many kill themselves for want of prudence, he had occasion to announce at Parade Service a change in the hour for funerals. He prefaced the notice with the remark that "the burial season is now begun." His whole sermon after this was on the few who would be saved. So the officers told me that he gave them no chance either in this world or in the next. Yes; the soldier at Malta and in other warm countries should take

the advice of his true friend, Rudyard Kipling:

"First, mind you steer clear o' the grog-sellers' huts,
For they sell you 'Fixed Bay'nets' that rots out your guts—
Ay, drink that 'ud eat the live steel from your butts—
An' it's bad for the young British Soldier,
Bad, bad, bad for the soldier."

Perhaps things are better now in Malta than when I was there. I hear that a "Soldiers' Club" has been established in a central place to draw men away from grog-shops—many of them brothels. At the club, good beer in strict moderation may be obtained. In this it differs from "Soldiers' Homes," which only sell teetotal beverages, and which are avoided on that account by men who *will* have beer.

The writer knows an army chaplain living abroad, who, feeling that soldiers in a country where they cannot speak the language are very friendless, has an "at home" for them at his house one evening in the week. They are received in the drawing-room just as officers would be received, talked to in a friendly way, and shown books, photographs, and curios. Then they have tea, sandwiches, cakes,

fruit, and such-like light refreshments. Afterwards there are recitations and music, and a hymn before parting. As these are social entertainments, for the purpose of getting upon a friendly footing with the men, the chaplain does not invite more on each occasion than can be talked to individually, and he keeps from lecturing and asking impertinent questions as much as he would if he were entertaining officers. He knows that soldiers are of the negro's way of thinking—"If you floggee, floggee, and if you preachee, preachee; but no preachee and floggee both." Having a very large, though cheap, house at Malta, I did myself a good deal of this sort of thing, and know its value.

Certainly it is abroad that a chaplain can most easily make friends with soldiers. They like to have a good talk about old England, and an opportunity of grumbling at the "uncivilised country" in which they find themselves. I am always telling them that they have much to learn from people belonging to other countries and to other religions, but they will persist in despising and calling uncivilised,

any nation that does not speak English. Even officers are not altogether without this kind of unreasonableness. I knew one in Malta who, having asked the way to the place to which he was riding, was answered by a shrug of the shoulders and a "No speak English." "You're a fool then," said the officer impatiently.

The Maltese understood enough English to ask: "Do you know Maltese?" "No." "Do you know Arabic?" "No." "Do you know Italian?" "No." "Do you know Greek?" "No." "Then you four fools, I only one."

Kipling's returned soldier graphically expresses the idea, too common among certain classes of Englishmen, that moral restrictions are less binding in the East than at home:

"Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there earn't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst."

I have often seen illustrations of this in Egypt. Indeed, considering how great and how many are the temptations of our soldiers abroad, I am surprised that Atkins

is as good as he is. He is so good that I wish he were better.

But though our soldiers easily accommodate themselves to foreign service, they do not cease to love their native country, or forget the old folk at home. Over the cots of men who are anything but exemplary characters, may be frequently noticed small brass-framed photographs of "the old gentleman" and "the old lady," as they call their fathers and mothers.

Under a beautifully blue sky abroad, of which they had become weary, I have heard them say that they would give several days' pay to be once more in a London fog.

Perhaps it was the same sort of perverted weather taste, as some may consider it, that made a soldier of the Connaught Rangers reply, when I asked him how he liked Malta: "The worst of the miserable place is, that for five months in the year you can't get a wetting." In the military hot-bed to which he had been transplanted, the poor fellow missed the "soft weather" of his native town of Cork, where it is said to rain three hundred days in the year.

In England we grumble if we get what we consider too much rain, but you weary of sunshine when you have had it, as is the case at Malta, five months without a cloud. We can understand the old Indian colonel who was almost maddened by a subaltern, just come out from England, saying to him three mornings in succession, "Another fine sunny day, sir."

Photo] *[G. W. Roche, Dublin.*

Lord Roberts addressing the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders as they were leaving for South Africa.

CHAPTER XXIV

ACTIVE SERVICE

NEVER did soldiers set out for a war in better spirits than did ours for this last one against the Boers. They went as to a picnic, and afforded a pathetic illustration of the proverb: "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise." When bidding me good-bye many of them said: "We are off to have a shot at old Kruger," and if I gently hinted that it was well to be prepared for some of Kruger's shots putting an end to them, they replied: "Oh, that will be all right, sir; it is all in the seven (their seven years in the army), and if I am put out of mess (killed) we must all die some time, and there is no better way of doing this than for the old lady (the Queen) and the old country."

But if our soldiers started for the Cape as St Paul did for Jerusalem, not knowing the things that would befall them, they have by

their letters home enabled us to realise something of the realities of war in general and of this one in particular. Mr Thomas Atkins has become his own war correspondent, and describes the details of fighting and the feelings of fighters with intelligence and literary effect that are not always surpassed by professional war correspondents. It is to be hoped that politicians and civilians, who talk lightly of going to war, not themselves, but on the feet of their military representatives, read the letters of Atkins that are sent from time to time to the newspapers by the friends who receive them. From them they may learn in their easy-chairs what war is like. Not that there is grumbling in the letters. Rather there is a rollicking contempt for hardship and danger, forgetfulness of self and thought for others. If, for instance, in a letter from Ladysmith, a private mentions that "the hardships of war have not been exaggerated," he goes on thus: "To see our smart officers, God bless them! roughing it like navvies, makes you respect them and no mistake." That this admiration for the way officers rough it and fight on active service is general throughout the rank and file, I

know from what men say to me every day.

Mr W. C. Hannah, a son of the vicar of Brighton, went to Ladysmith to get from the officers of the Leicestershire Regiment details of the death of his brother, who was the first officer killed at Dundee. Mr Hannah in a letter says :

"I dined with the Dundee column last night. I will give you a description of this dinner as showing how 'gilded popinjays' fare when times are warlike. There was no furniture either in the mess-room or ante-room. If you wanted to sit down you did so on the floor. We each got hold of a tin mug, and dipped it into a tin saucepan of soup and drank it, spoons not existing. A lump of salt was passed round, and every one broke off a piece with his fingers. Next you get hold of a piece of bread and a chunk of tongue, and gnawed first one and then the other—knives and forks there were none. This finished the dinner. Add to this two or three tallow candles stuck on a cocoa tin, and the fact that none of the officers had shaved or had their clothes off for a week, and had walked some 45 miles through rivers and mud, and you will have some idea of how the officers' mess of one of the smartest of Her Majesty's regiments do for themselves in times of war. Not a murmur or complaint was to be heard."

Better this than excessive luxury in peace times. An Irish squire remarked in a club in Dublin that his son was going out to the

war. A friend asked: "Why don't you let the poor boy stay at home and die of drink like his fathers?"

Unfortunately, I only cut out and kept a few of the letters of Mr Atkins, but from these some extracts may be acceptable. The first is from a letter of Private Francis Burns, of the Royal Irish Fusiliers:—

"We have just come from Ladysmith to Dundee, and went for the Boers at 5.30. When within a thousand yards shot and shell began to fly about us. There is no mistake they can shoot. Dead and dying were all around, but we lose all feeling in battle. Up the hill we went with fixed bayonets, but the cowards did not wait for us, but ran like sheep. They put up a flag of truce, and our general would not let us fire on them, when we and the cavalry could have slaughtered the lot. The dead were on top of each other. It was terrible. We have had five days and nights of misery. The world will never know what Irishmen did those fearful nights. We came through a place called The Devil's Pass. All it wanted was some fire, and it would have been hell."

Private F. Stewart, of the Gordon Highlanders, thus wrote in a letter home:—

"We charged three times with the bayonet, and my gun was covered with blood, although I don't remember striking anybody; but I was nearly mad with excitement—shells bursting, and bullets whizzing round like hail. I was close behind the commanding officer

when he was wounded. He was shot, and had to sit down, but he cheered on his men. 'Forward, Gordons!' he cried; 'the world is looking at you.' He then started crying because he could no longer lead his battalion."

Private Brown, of the 1st Battalion Kings Royal Rifles, gives a vivid account of the circumstances attending Colonel Gunning's death in the Talana Hill engagement:—

"Half-way up there was a breastwork of rocks to climb over, and then we were picked off one by one, but worse than that we had a flat piece of ground to go over right in the open. Our men were dropping down wounded, and our colonel thought they were retiring. He turned round, revolver in hand, and said that any man retiring under the Boer fire he would shoot, and he immediately received a bullet in his heart, and fell to get up no more. He was in charge of my company at the time. Another of our officers was hit in the stomach and blown to pieces by a shell from our own guns. We advanced under their fire. We must have killed 1,000 Boers. We found 800 buried in a coal-pit, and the place was strewn with the wounded, dead, and horses. . . . You can pretty well guess what the hardships were on an empty stomach, and raining nearly all the time."

Of the same battle another soldier thus writes:—

"You cannot imagine the missiles flying, the hissing, splashing, banging, and roaring quite deafening, and

the rattle-tattle of the Maxims, which the enemy were also armed with. The Boers along the front sold their lives to cover the retreat of their friends. They were shot, some falling on their faces, others on their backs, more doubling up—an awful sight!"

Here is an extract from the letter of a private in the 1st King's Royal Rifles, written after the battle of Elandslaagte to a friend in Preston. He describes the work of the cavalry:—

"I tell you it was a great but a terrible sight to see those horsemen hew their way through the Boers with their swords. Three times they rode right through the Boers, hacking, cutting, slashing. We had suffered pretty severely, and I suppose we got our backs up a bit. Anyhow, we got even with Joubert's men. I saw several Boers whose heads had been cut right off by our cavalrymen's swords. It is ghastly, isn't it? But it's the plain truth. Some of the Boers had died in praying attitudes. Many, I was told by a friend in the 5th Lancers, flung down their arms as soon as they saw the flash of the lances, and, clasping their hands above their heads, begged for mercy. But they had shown no mercy to our men; some day, if I am spared, I will tell you some incidents of how the Boers behaved to our men—killing and hammering our wounded as they lay on the field—and this was our revenge."

Private M'Vinnie, of the Gordon Highlanders, writing home to Dumfries, tells in

a feeling way how he found in the heaps of slain Boers, boys thirteen years of age lying alongside of grey-bearded men :—

"You should have seen our artillery firing—it was beautiful, but it was terrible, for they were knocking the Boers over by tens."

The loot that was taken is said to have been Scotch whisky and horses. We are surprised that acute people like the Boers should have had in their camp a material so dangerous on active service as whisky. Horses were cheap that day, and one Tommy sold his captured steed, though a good one, for three cigarettes. Notes or bills to the amount of two hundred and seventy pounds found by a soldier on a dead Boer were an exception to the rule that on active service kicks are more plentiful than halfpence.

What war means may be learned from the fact that at Modder River the troops slept on the field of battle, after being sixteen hours without food or water, and thirteen under fire; that English soldiers, who were taken prisoners by the Boers at Stormberg, were forty-eight hours before they got food; and that others of our men

marched thirty miles continuously, fighting most of the way. "Though getting no sleep or rest for three days, they were full of pluck and high spirits."

Tommy may fall out of the ranks when route-marching during peace, but he "sticks" it manfully on active service, tramping and fighting on bleeding feet. And he is always ready with a joke to enliven himself and comrades. In this he follows the lead given long ago by one of Marlborough's generals. The general was dining at the Mansion House, and an alderman sitting next to him remarked: "Yours, sir, must be a very laborious profession."

"Oh no," the warrior responded, airily, "we fight for four hours in the morning, and two or three after dinner, and then we have the rest of the day to ourselves."

General Gatacre never asked his men to do what he did not do himself, but being full of zeal and energy, he gave the force under his command plenty of marching when necessary. In the Soudan, on the way to Atbara, a chaplain said encouragingly, "Come, lads, it's only another mile to the halt!"

"Aye, your reverence," replied one, "but it's a back-acher mile!"

A newspaper correspondent made some remark to a soldier whom he saw dying his accoutrements, his hands, and perhaps his face, khaki colour, so as not to be seen by the Boer sharp-shooters. Tommy replied cheerfully, "It is better to be alive and dirty, than clean and dead."

Another correspondent wrote:—

"We attacked the enemy's position during a thunderstorm, the rain coming down in torrents—also hailstones as big as pigeon's eggs—and we marched on without overcoats, and then camped out with no blankets. Then an attack at 2 A.M. The night was pitch dark, and one could only see by the flashes of lightning."

Nothing tests soldiers so much as night attacks. Everything looks so different at night. All is confusion; men fall over obstacles, and bayonet their friends in mistake for enemies.

As a rule, the letters from our soldiers which describe engagements are couched in an excellent spirit, though there is an occasional sentiment in reference to the enemy that had better have been omitted. It is related that the Lancers shouted

"Majuba!" as they charged, that even an officer said to his men, "Give it to the beggars! Exterminate the vermin!" and that another officer wrote after a cavalry charge that they had had "most excellent pig-sticking, the bag being about sixty." I am sure that these words were never meant to express what it has been said they do express—"a fiendish spirit of slaughter and vengeance." We at home, with nothing to excite and nothing to provoke us, can easily object to this sort of thing as opposed to good taste, not to speak of Christianity, but we should ask ourselves if we in time of peace always "move upward working out the beast," if we always "let the ape and tiger" that are within us "die." And certainly a battle draws out what is very good as well as what is very bad. In a letter a private soldier mentions that one of his officers (Major Moule), as he fell at the battle of Graspan, uttered the words, "Go on men, never mind me!"

An interesting incident at the dinner given last year to the survivors of the Balaclava charge was the reading of a letter from Miss Florence Nightingale, in

which she said that, although few men and perhaps no women had seen so much of the horrors of war as she had, she still thought that war, as well as persecution, had its advantages:—

"But see those manly fellows in time of war, men not near the beasts, as sometimes we too sadly see in the time of peace: see them not one taking a drop too much; not one gallivanting with the women; every one devoting even his life for his comrade on the field, without notice or praise from any one, either in words or in print; and if killed in the attempt, his name only going down as 'killed in battle'; always devoted even to the death, as our Great Master and Friend, Jesus Christ, was to His fellow-men."

In one of our Egyptian campaigns an English soldier in the Camel Corps noticed an infantry man who was wounded in the throat left on the ground as the square moved on. Handing his carbine to a comrade, he sprang off his camel, ran out of the square, picked up the wounded man, and ran back with him, gaining the shelter of the bayonets just as the nearest of the enemy had their spears raised to strike. When the colonel called the brave fellow out to commend him, at the end of the day's fighting, he was actually afraid of being punished for leaving the square.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said, as he saluted. "I didn't mean to do it, but I forgot orders when I saw a chum in trouble!"

In a recent battle in South Africa, Captain Paton of the Dublin Fusiliers was left wounded. One of the privates of his company lay all night by his side with his arms round him, in drenching rain, in order that warmth from his own body might keep the spark of life in the officer's.

An incident even more touching is related in the annals of the same regiment. Seventy years ago there were two foster brothers in the regiment, one of them a fair-haired young officer, the other a wild gossoon of a private. "Ye'll be looking after Terence!" the "ould leddy at the Castle" had said to Pat Murphy, when the two boys started for active service. "Sure and I will!" said Pat. Before three years were over both of them were severely wounded in a mountain battle in India. When they were found on the following morning the officer was living, the private was dead. And yet of the two he was less seriously injured, but he had taken off his clothes and heaped them upon his unconscious master, in order

to protect him from the bitter frost of the mountain-side. He had laid down his life for his friend.

It is strange to hear soldiers at home talking of soldiers abroad, who have been severely wounded, and who have died. They seldom express pity for them, nor do they feel much. And the want of what might seem a natural sensation, is really very fine, for it is due to a conviction that a man has to do his duty, and that to die in the performance of it covers him with honour.

I remember trying to draw from a friend who had distinguished himself in the battle of the Alma, where he had two horses killed under him, something as to his feelings and experiences in an engagement. All I could get from him was: "A battle is a very disagreeable place to be in. Come and I'll show you my pigs." Some of the results of battle which I saw afterwards in hospital enabled me to understand my old friend's willingness to speak of pigs, or of anything else, rather than of "glorious war." My romantic feelings about war vanished after seeing a large ward full of wounded men, the majority of whom were to undergo some

terrible operation when they had regained sufficient strength.

Continental nations, while sneering at everything else connected with the South African campaign, had only admiration for the way British officers and men fought. One French newspaper said that our soldiers are the best in the world. But it may be that the very greatness of their courage sometimes hides it. We take it for granted, we become so accustomed to read of the coolness of Mr Thomas Atkins amidst a hail of bullets, that we begin to fancy that with a good umbrella we would be equally indifferent to the shower.

Is courage then natural, and are all men brave? Quite the contrary. What is natural is an instinctive desire to save life and limb, and those who overcome this from a sense of duty ought to get credit for doing so. No doubt the wild pulsation of strife is a rapture to many.[1] No doubt Lord Wolseley was right when he said that no pleasure equals the excitement of fighting, but it is an acquired taste, and the first field

[1] A private thus wrote to his parents in Llanelly: "You can't believe how happy I was fighting against the Boers. I felt as if I were in a football match."

of battle in which a man finds himself is, for some time at least, a disagreeable place.

And there is far more opportunity for skulking now than formerly. When fighting was done in crowds, men could not run away or lie down even if they wished, but now that they fight in extended order, and are told to take cover as much as possible, it becomes a temptation to do nothing but take cover. I visited most of the battle-fields after the Franco-Prussian War, and talked to many who had been in action, and they told me that in both armies officers had continually to threaten to shoot men if they would not stand up. A soldier may be comparatively comfortable where bullets are whistling and shells bursting until the man on one side of him is blown to atoms, and the man on the other lies down and pretends to be wounded. Then he asks himself, "What shall I do?"

In the American Civil War and in the Franco-German War, not to mention things that happened nearer home, there were regiments seized with sudden panic. They bolted to a man, and afterwards covered themselves with glory by the way they atoned for their unaccountable lapse from courage.

An officer who has had much experience of active service, thus writes :—

"I remember a confidential chat I had a day or two before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir with a subaltern, fresh from Sandhurst. He was a small, delicate-looking fellow, fitter for the study than the battle-field, and he was full of all kinds of nervous fears. He was 'a born coward,' he told me, with tears almost starting to his eyes. At Eton he had been bullied all round, and never had the pluck to retaliate; he had never struck a blow in anger in his life, and he 'was sure he would disgrace himself for ever' in his first fight, which was then imminent. Of course I tried to cheer him up, but he had absolutely no confidence in himself. I saw him just before the fight began, looking pitifully white and haggard, and I never saw him again alive; but I heard that he had fought like a hero, and that he had lost his life in an effort to save one of his men who had been unhorsed and was surrounded by the enemy."

The bravest soldiers are often the most afraid when they first face an enemy, just as the grandest orators are most nervous when they begin to speak. This is because men fight and are eloquent by means of nerve power. Soon excitement makes the fighter and the orator all right, they get their nerves under control, and astonish every one, but none more than themselves, by gaining V.C.'s, or speaking words that are half battles.

"If one did not know you, colonel," said

a subaltern, "one would say you were afraid."

"Boy," was the answer, "if you were half as much afraid as I am, you would run away."

As a certain Highland regiment was going into action during an Egyptian campaign, the following conversation is said to have taken place between two privates. Number One, who was under fire for the first time, to Number Two, a veteran in the front rank: "Dinna bob, Geordie, I'm ahint ye."

Shakespeare represents a hero thus speaking to his body before a battle begins:

"Thou tremblest, my poor body, but if thou didst know
Where I will bring you before the day is over
Thou would'st tremble much more."

Let us then appreciate the courage of Mr Thomas Atkins, and not think of it as something that must be. There is no such necessity, and I am often astonished by it when I reflect that the "gallant private," unlike his officer, has not much professional advancement to expect from his "heroism obscure," nor much social position to lose if he should be the opposite of a hero.

If imitation is the sincerest flattery, Atkins

is now much flattered, for every man, however old, wants to be a soldier, and go to fight in South Africa. In times of war there are many more who wish to become food for powder than in the piping times of peace. This ebullition of military ardour is now seen in all parts of the country, even in little Wales. "Taffy" has never been too keen to don the Queen's uniform, as the following proves:—

A distinguished Welsh regiment marched through its territorial district in the hopes of stimulating enlistment. In one town it succeeded in securing—one recruit. The following Sunday, in the Nonconformist chapel to which the military aspirant had belonged, the minister announced from the pulpit—"We will now take up a collection for the purpose of buying the discharge of our young brother, Morgan A. P. Jones, who has gone for a soldier."

Photo] [*G. W. Roche, Dublin.*

Duchess of York presenting Colours to three Regiments.

CHAPTER XXV

COLOURS

I ASSISTED at a ceremony which was in its way unique. Never before were colours presented to three regiments on the same parade, but this is what took place in the Fifteen Acres, Phœnix Park, Dublin, on 23rd August, 1897. Then the Duchess of York gave colours to the 1st Battalion Yorkshire Light Infantry, the 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers.

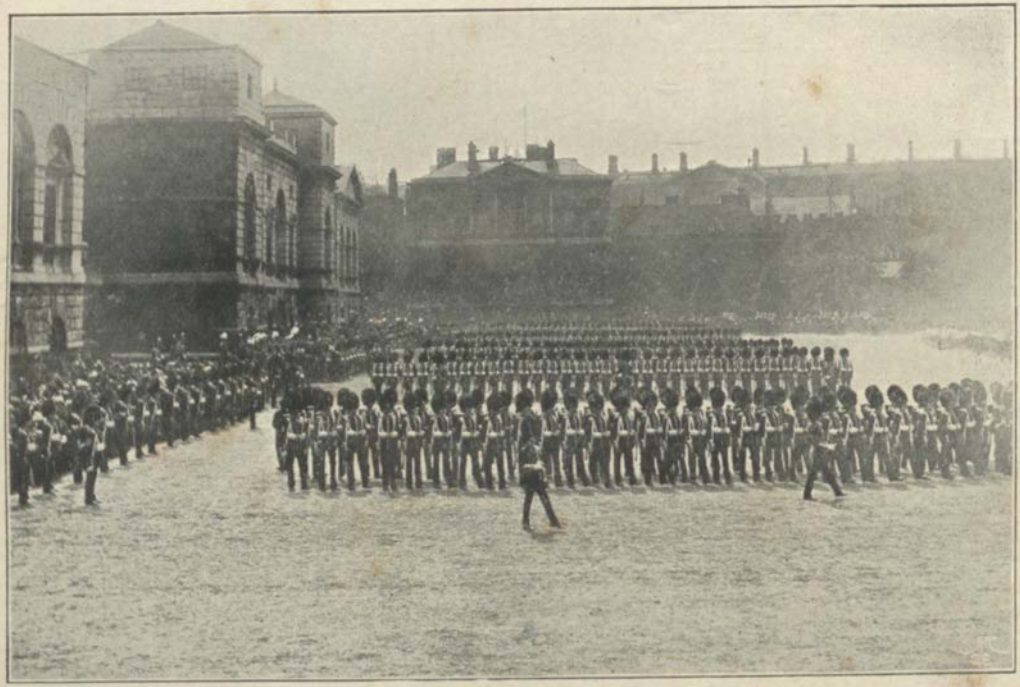
The three battalions were drawn up in line, their bands being massed together. Lord Roberts, on his little white Arab charger[1] Kandahar, which wore the medals it had been permitted to wear for the campaigns it had gone through, received the Duke and Duchess, and the two

[1] This four-footed soldier has lately died, full of years and honours.

thousand soldiers gave a royal salute. Then the old colours were trooped.

The origin and meaning of this ceremony are uncertain. It is mentioned 110 years ago, and seems to have been then of much more frequent occurrence than it is now. It begins by the drummers beating the "assembly" and marching across the parade. The company officers then march straight across the ground in line to their companies. It is very difficult for them to march in a perfectly straight line at a considerable distance apart from each other, and requires a great deal of practice.

It is said that in the days of the Prince Regent "trooping colours" was frequently ordered to take place in the early morning as a test of the sobriety of officers the evening before; because, unless a man were very steady on his feet, the effect of the slow march of the officers right across the ground to their respective companies would be disastrous. We need not describe the various movements that are comprised in the term "trooping colours." Suffice it to say, that the escorts of the colours march and countermarch with them in and out of the lines, that the troops salute very



Photo] TROOPING THE COLOURS. [*Reinhold Thiele & Co., 66 Chancery Lane.*

often, and that the ceremony is remarkable as being the only occasion in peace time when the sergeant-major draws his sword and salutes with it in the same manner as does a commissioned officer.

On the occasion of which we are speaking, after the old colours were trooped, they were taken to the rear of their regiments while the bands played the appropriate tune, "Auld Lang Syne." The "life" of colours is generally about twenty-five years; but so many memories and associations cluster round the stained and torn silk rags, that they are sometimes kept much longer.

The battalions after this formed three sides of a hollow square, in the centre of which were piled in pyramidal form, three sets of drums, and against these the new colours were placed. Then the writer and another clergyman stepped forward and read the prayers of consecration, and to the accompaniment of the three bands the hymn "Brightly gleams our banner" was sung. The first prayer asks that courage resting upon sure trust and confidence in God may be given to those who shall follow the new standards, that if

they win, they may use victory with moderation, and that if success should not always attend them, its absence may never be accompanied by dishonour. After the Benediction had been given, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York presented the colours to the three regiments. In each case she was handed the standard by the senior major of the corps, and she presented them to the senior lieutenant, who received them kneeling. The Duke of York then read a little address, which was replied to by the three colonels. They came forward one after the other, saluted, and said their few carefully prepared words, much as schoolboys do their recitations on prize day. The new colours of the royal party were then saluted, and this was the end of a most interesting ceremony.

The respect or honour paid to the ensign or "colour" dates from the time when Roman legions fought round and under their straw-crowned poles. Julius Cæsar, as schoolboys know, says in his account of his battle with the Nervii, in B.C. 57, that his men were trained, when separated from their company standard, to

rally round the first colour they could find, and not lose time seeking for their own. Afterwards, the straw or fern in the Roman army disappeared, and its place was taken by an eagle, a bear, a globe, or some other symbol. In mediæval times, the banner carried by each knight was not square, but of the swallow-tailed or pennon description. In 1598, each company had its own colour, and in an old book of the time it is said: "We Englishmen do call them of late colours, by reason of the variety of colours they be made of, whereby they be the better noted and known to the company."

There are people who ask, What is the use of a flag? is it not merely a piece of silk? No, it is not merely a piece of silk; it is a symbol which connects the soldier with the past, and reminds him of his duties in the present. It tells of blood lavishly spilt on the battle-field, and of the soldier's patient endurance of the extremes of heat and cold, shipwreck, hunger, thirst, and disease.

Carrying a standard in action has always been considered a distinction, and its preservation from capture a prominent point

of martial honour. At Dettingen, in 1743, the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons, now the 3rd Hussars, cut through nine squadrons of the French Cavalry of the Guards three times. Of the three cornets who bore the standards, two were wounded, and the third had two horses killed under him. Then, being wounded himself in the wrist, the standard dropped from his hand. A private named Thomas Brown attempted to dismount in order to recover it, but in so doing, lost two fingers of his bridle-hand by a sabre-cut, and his horse ran away with him to the rear of the French lines. While endeavouring to regain his regiment, he saw the standard, which the French had succeeded in capturing by overwhelming numbers, in the custody of a *gendarme*. This man he killed, caught the standard as it fell, and fixing it between his leg and the saddle, succeeded in cutting his way back through the ranks of the enemy. He received in so doing seven wounds in his head, face, and body, and three bullets passed through his hat. In the same battle, Cornet Richardson was surrounded, but refused to surrender, and received upwards of thirty sabre-cuts and

gun-shot wounds, on his body and through his clothes, in saving the standard he carried. At Fontenoy, two years later, Sir William Erskine, who commanded the Scots Greys, to test his son, a cornet, only sixteen years of age, tied a standard to the boy's right leg, and said, "Go, and take care of this; let me not see you separate, for, if you return alive, you must produce this." After the battle the cornet, who had borne himself nobly throughout the day, rode up to his father, and proudly displayed the standard tight and fast, as in the morning. At Rousbech, in the Netherlands, Trooper Maneely, belonging to what is now called the 8th Hussars, was very severely wounded, and had his horse killed under him, in defence of a standard of the regiment. When his strength began to fail from loss of blood, he managed to bury the standard on the field before he fainted and was taken prisoner.

At Seringapatam a sergeant of the Dublin Fusiliers named Grahame planted the colours of the regiment on the ramparts amid a hail of bullets. "Hang them!" he cried, "I'll show what a British soldier can do." He had been

promised a commission if he succeeded in the terrible adventure, so he continued, "Here's to Lieutenant Grahame!" Scarcely had the words left his lips when a bullet pierced his heart.

Major-General Luke O'Connor, who began his military career as a private in the 23rd regiment, won the Victoria Cross, and his first commission at the same time at the battle of the Alma River for conspicuous gallantry in taking over the "Queen's colour" of his regiment after Ensign Anstruther, in whose keeping it first was, had been shot.

Lieutenant Roberts, now Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, V.C., G.C.B., etc., had done many cool deeds of bravery before the relief of Lucknow, but on that occasion he surpassed himself. His own very modest and self-effacing account of the incident is this:

"I took the flag of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, by Sir Colin Campbell's orders, and placed it on the Mess House, to show Outram and Havelock where we were. The enemy knocked the flagstaff down three times, breaking the pole once."

But it was just as often put up again by the dauntless. Roberts, who stuck to his object amid a hail of bullets.

On another occasion, at Lucknow:

"While following up the retreating enemy, with the ardour of a fox-hunter, Roberts saw two Sepoys marching off with a standard. Putting spurs to his horse, he overtook them just as they were about to enter a village, and made for them, sword in hand. They immediately turned at bay, and presented their muskets at him. It was a critical moment as one of them pulled the trigger, but the cap snapped almost in Roberts' face, and the next moment he had laid the Sepoy carrying the standard dead at his feet, with a tremendous cut across the head, seizing the trophy as it fell from his lifeless grasp. Meanwhile his companion made off to the village."

In the Boer War, Lieutenant Baillie of the 58th Regiment, who carried the regimental colour, was mortally wounded. The officer who carried the Queen's colour, called Peel, turned to assist him. "Never mind me; save the colours," was Baillie's answer. Peel was forced to comply, and taking the standard from the hand of his dying comrade, he was carrying it away when he fell into an ant-bear hole. Sergeant Bridgstock, who was close by, thinking he had been shot, seized the flags, and carried them some distance, till Peel came up and took them.

It is true that, as the colonels stated in

their speeches when thanking the Duchess of York, colours are not now carried into action. They would be an impossibility, and quite useless in these days of weapons of great precision, and of extended formation of troops. The man who would now carry a colour in battle would be simply committing suicide. Still battalions will continue to look upon their colours as emblems of former victories, and will be true to them, even when these standards are reposing in the regimental depôt far from the scene of action. The artillery have no colours, but they are as true to their guns as cavalry and infantry soldiers used to be to their standards. Our rifle battalions have never carried colours, but they have been second to none in adding honour to the military history of England.

The 43rd Light Infantry (now the Oxfordshire Light Infantry), was one of the three regiments that formed the famous "Light Division" in the Peninsular War: "Soldiers never surpassed in arms since arms were first borne by men."

The following verses were written by the late General Sir E. B. Hamley, after

seeing the Peninsular Colours of this corps in Monmouth Church, in 1887 :—

A moth-eaten rag on a worm-eaten pole,
It does not look likely to stir a man's soul :
'Tis the deeds that were done 'neath the moth-eaten rag,
When the pole was a staff, and the rag was a flag.

For on many a morn in our grandfathers' days,
When the bright suns of Portugal broke through the haze,
Disclosing the armies arrayed in their might,
It showed the old flag in front of the fight.

By rivers, o'er bridges, past vineyards and downs,
Up the valley, where stood, all deserted, the towns,
It followed the French, and, when they turned to bay,
It just paused for the fight, then again led the way.

And whenever it chanced that a battle was nigh,
They saw it then hung like a sign in the sky,
And they soon learned to know it—its crimson and white—
O'er the line of red coats and of bayonets bright.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHRISTMAS IN THE ARMY

WHEN I became a chaplain to the Forces, almost the only idea which the majority of soldiers had of "enjoying" themselves at Christmas was that of Nabal the fool, of whom it is said in the thirty-sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book of Samuel, that "Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken."

The soldier of those days did not consider his merriment complete until he had given and received in a business-like way "a pair of jolly black eyes." Even then, however, this sort of thing was not all enjoyment to some of the men, as was evidenced by the relief they seemed to feel when Christmas was over, and by speaking of it as if it were a campaign through which they had passed. When serving

at Bermuda, Cyprus, or some place abroad where there was no soldiers' Institute (in these Institutes there is generally now on Christmas evenings a tea and entertainment as a refuge from the furious fun of the barrack-room), I have on more than one Christmas afternoon met men with strong temperance views skulking about a mile or two from barracks, rather than stay in a place where there was "enjoyment" that took all joy from them. They gladly accepted an invitation to remain at my house until things had quieted down in barracks, and those who would have been disagreeable were sleeping the sleep of the drunk.

This state of things, however, like other abuses arising from drink, is being improved out of the army. Now, nearly half the men belonging to corps stationed in the British Islands take advantage of the cheaper fares that are allowed to soldiers on furlough, and spend Christmas with their friends. Those who are obliged to remain at their duty celebrate the day, in some corps at least, almost as decorously and domestically as respectable householders. They attend Divine Service

at eleven o'clock, and after this begin to interest themselves in the Christmas dinner, some helping to arrange the tables, and the rest criticising the operation.

The general who commanded the last garrison at which I was stationed was as kind of heart as he was keen for sport, so after a day's shooting he used sometimes to send part of his bag to the Station Hospital, thinking that a little game would be a treat to the sick soldiers. One day when visiting there I saw a man eating a pheasant that had come in this way, and covering each morsel with mustard! "Do you like mustard with pheasant?" I asked. "Tasteless stuff by itself," was the reply. Opinions differ as to what is "tasteless stuff"; but a company of the Connaught Rangers, when I was at Malta with that regiment, were determined to have something not too delicate in flavour for their Christmas dinner. Being asked by their captain what they would like, they replied through their colour-sergeant, "Tell his honour we'll have bacon and cabbage; nothing can come up to that!"

English regiments have plenty of ham and pork, but they add to these mutton,

geese, and even turkeys. Indeed our soldiers are getting quite stylish in their Christmas eating, for I noticed on one of the well-filled tables in a barrack-room last Christmas, two or three pheasants, which, let us hope, were found tasty enough without mustard. But no matter of what the dinner consists, it is always accompanied by many large bottles of pickles. I am not sure that they are never eaten with the plum-puddings!

Talking of plum-pudding reminds me of an old soldier, in the days when we had old soldiers. He had become a perfect machine by years of discipline, and one Christmas, as he was carrying a plum-pudding out of the cook-house, some-one in joke called out from behind, "Attention!" Down went the soldier's arms by his side, and down went the pudding.

The extra eatables and drinkables, as well as the appearance of the tables, require glass and delf, and these are hired for the day by the colour-sergeant of each company. We may here remark that Christmas is the only day that Mr Thomas Atkins drinks anything, even water, with

his dinner.[1] His usual habit is to go to the canteen when it opens at twelve o'clock, or about an hour before dinner, and quench his thirst.

If it be asked where the money for the Christmas feast comes from, we reply that the broad back of the canteen fund bears part of the burden, and that in some regiments the officers contribute handsomely.

With few exceptions, officers nowadays are very solicitous about the comfort of their men, but never do they shine so much as fathers of companies or of battalions, as at Christmas time. They may vote the season a great bore themselves, but they are as anxious that those under their command should have a pleasant Christmas as is the best paterfamilias in reference to his family.

[1] In a few corps, especially cavalry ones, the men are allowed to buy beer at the canteen and take it with their dinner every day. In some regiments, too, they can have beer limited to one pint when taking supper at the coffee bar. This encouragement to combine drinking with eating is found to have a good effect. The allowance of beer for the Christmas dinner is supposed not to exceed one gallon per man, which truly is liberal enough, but it often does, and men get into the stage in which they pour beer over the goose for gravy. Those feel better next day who only partake of the beverages which are provided for the teetotalers.

Here is an instance of their self-suppression, which those who have cultivated palates for tasting wine will appreciate. When the soldiers are assembled at their Christmas dinner-tables, just before the "attack" begins, the commanding officer, adjutant, and other officers visit all the rooms to wish the men the compliments of the season. When asked, as these gentlemen are by the senior non-commissioned officer in each room, if they will have port wine or sherry to drink the health of the men, they are very far from replying, as the farmer did when paying his rent, to the same invitation—"Both." If they were not afraid of giving offence they would answer "Neither," when after going through half-a-dozen rooms they are asked in the seventh if they will have (fruity) port or (fiery) sherry. The same spirit of Christmas martyrdom induces officers to dine away from their regimental mess so that the servants may have Christmas afternoon and evening to themselves.

When I knew the fourth battalion of the Rifle Brigade the officers seemed never to leave their men for the few

days before and after Christmas. They devoted themselves to them, and they made such good arrangements that drunkenness and gluttony were quite abolished. The festivities were spread over two or three days instead of all taking place on the great day of the feast. On Boxing Day the men were kept from harm outside barracks by the amusements supplied within. Regimental sports took place during the day, and in the evening there were boxing competitions and a variety entertainment. I never knew a battalion which could recover sooner from Christmas, so to speak, than this one. The day after Boxing Day sees all decorations down and the men as keen as mustard at their work. On Boxing Day in most regiments a football match is played. Generally it is one between married and unmarried sergeants, and is the occasion of much joking, the wives and their friends being, of course, interested spectators. On the second day after Christmas things go back to the old routine, and, partly in order to work off the effects of Christmas cheer, a long route-march is frequently ordered.

On Christmas Day soldiers generally

dine at two o'clock, which is an hour later than on other days, and I have known them "make a night of it" by putting blankets over the windows to exclude daylight. After dinner a move is made to the rooms that have been prepared for the dance or smoking concert which generally follows it. The iron bedcots, when arranged along the walls, and covered so as to look like sofas, are convenient receptacles for chaperons and "wall-flowers." The dance music is sometimes peculiar. I have seen men gravely performing reels to the accompaniment of a bugle blown in after-Christmas-dinner-fashion.

I take as childish a delight as do the soldiers themselves in the decorations they put up in the rooms where they are to have their Christmas dinners, and examine them more carefully as each Christmas comes round. Occasionally, I find a new motto or device; but there is, of course, much sameness in this as in everything else in the world. I did not like one motto that I found last year. It was: "Licensed to be drunk on the premises." There are the inevitable chains, composed of rings of coloured paper. Chinese

lanterns and coloured balls are never absent, while shields, hearts, and anchors, are made of swords, bayonets, and other implements of war. The battles at which the regiment assisted are emblazoned upon the walls of the rooms, and good wishes for the officers and their families. "Success and Long Life" are also wished, in gilt or coloured paper letters, to the sergeant-major and other members of the regimental happy family.

In the band-room of the Shropshire Regiment there was, one Christmas, a musical notation, hoping that *a chord* might bind them all in unison. On the same wall was a well-done painting, representing three white helmets, such as are worn abroad, and alongside as many black ones. Over the former was printed in gilt letters, "To our Comrades Abroad —God Prosper Them." Soldiers, whether at home or abroad, seem to be on very good terms with themselves, if we may judge from another mural legend: "Three Cheers for Tommy Atkins." But, indeed, the charity of this room was world-wide, for a third inscription wished "A Health to Everyone."

Over the door of another room, where the drummers of the same regiment dined, were the words, "Drummers' Restaurant." One of those who lived in the "restaurant" had been a stage painter, so he was able to enliven the whitewashed walls with paintings of beer-barrels, drums, colours, and other things hateful to members of Total Abstinence and Peace Preservation Societies. Between the pictures many appropriate military mottoes found a place. One was, "At Peace, but Still on Guard"; the other, "At Rest, but Ready." An indication of the better educated men who now enlist was furnished by two Latin mottoes, very cleverly printed. One was "*Nihil sine labore*," which was freely translated, "Oil is better than rust." I was pleased to see in one corner, "God Bless the Chaplain."

Below some good military jokes that were depicted two years ago on a wall of a room inhabited by men of the 13th Hussars was the admonition, "Remember the Cock," which was explained to me to mean: "Don't drink too much, but think of the cock-crow." Another piece of advice which was pleasant to notice was, "Don't Forget the Horses in the Stables." Alluding to the fact that the

same men come over and over to the prisoners' room, off the guard-room, the decorators put over the door the words, "There's no Place like Home." This was nearly as appropriate as "Hair Cut while you Wait," which adorned the gate of the garrison cells.

It is wonderful how quickly soldiers in hospital recover before Christmas Day. They persuade the doctors to allow them to return to barracks, as they want to change milk diet for the luxuries of the season. There is no official recognition of plum-pudding at the hospital dinner, but the men outside generally send some to their sick comrades. Once, at Netley Hospital, when it was proposed to give the patients plum-pudding, the principal medical officer said that, if the men were able to eat plum-pudding, they were able to leave the hospital, and he would not allow it to be given. Still the sternest authorities have to yield to King Christmas, so now a compromise is effected. The patients get a big tea, with cake, fruit, long pipes, and tobacco. After tea there is a variety entertainment.

But there is another kind of hospital in which some soldiers spend Christmas. It is

for the cure or check of moral, rather than of physical, diseases. I mean military prisons and garrison cells. In two of the largest of the former I have officiated as chaplain, and greatly disliked the task of preaching Christmas sermons to the inmates. What could one say to them? To wish a happy Christmas and many returns of the day might seem like mockery. The consolation I gave generally took the following form: "You, dear brethren, whose liberty is restricted, may pity yourselves to-day, but to-morrow you will wake up with clear, cool heads, with eyes the usual colour, and the satisfaction of feeling that you have not to take up any of the time of police-courts, which is all too short for the work to be done in them at this 'happy' season."

It may interest our readers to know that on one Christmas Day, at least, the inmates of one of these prisons had a mild kind of plum-pudding. The materials were given out of his abundant gains by the generous man who had a contract for supplying groceries.

Scotch regiments keep New Year's Day much as other regiments keep Christmas. Forgetting this, I went two years ago to a

barracks where was a battalion of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. I said to a man: "I want to see your Christmas decorations." He drew himself up and answered scornfully: "Our regiment doesn't hold with Christmas, sir."

The men of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, half English and half Scotch, try to get all the festivity they can out of both days. At five minutes to midnight on New Year's Eve the band of the Seaforth Highlanders, preceded by Father Time—the oldest soldier in the ranks, in costume, with hour-glass and scythe—plays across the barrack square and out of the gate, which is closed behind them. The strains of "Auld Lang Syne" bid farewell to the old year. As the clock strikes the hour of midnight a knock is heard at the barrack gate. To the sentry's challenge, "Who goes there?" comes the answer, "The New Year." "Advance, New Year; all's well," is the sentry's reply. The gates are thrown open, the guard turns out, and the "New Year"—represented by the youngest drummer-boy in full Highland costume—is carried on shoulders, preceded by the pipers of the regiment. After making a round of the

barracks he finishes at the officers' mess, where singing and Highland dancing are going on.

How did it fare with our soldiers in South Africa at Christmas? Well, they certainly were not forgotten by us at home. Their comrades commemorated them on the walls of their barrack-rooms when decorating for the festal season, and a firm of caterers won the applause of every one when they sent a Christmas gift of ten thousand plum-puddings, which weighed ten tons, to the front.

A correspondent from South Africa thus describes the way the festival was spent at Ladysmith

"Although the English and Boer armies are in sight of each other, and the temperature is 102° in the shade, our men have enjoyed themselves in a thoroughly characteristic manner to-day. Christmas cheer was distributed amongst the troops, and the thoughtfulness of the senders was greatly appreciated. Sports were organised, and several interesting contests were decided. The Naval Corps pulled effigies of John Bull and President Kruger through the camp on a gun-carriage to the accompaniment of popular airs. Periodicals were also distributed to the weight of several tons."

And the Boers too were polite in a warlike way. They fired two plugged shells into the town with "the compliments of the

season" printed on them. One of them contained a piece of plum-pudding.

No! Christmas is not forgotten on active service. The day before the festival during the Crimean war an enormous pudding, provided by the combined funds of three companies, was cooking in a camp-copper, when a Russian shell blew the entire "boiling" to pieces, and at the same time wounded severely the master-cook.

At Suakin, in 1884, the rebels were firing on the camp while the Christmas dinner was being eaten, and one bullet embedded itself in the centre of a huge baron of beef as it steamed in state at the head of the table. At this place as much as ten shillings a pound was paid for raisins. Much care and skill are required to produce a creditable Christmas dinner on a campaign; but it is always managed somehow. At least there are ham and pickles instead of "bully beef" and vinegar, and if nothing stronger is allowed there are always tea and coffee.

Dinner over, pipes, cigarettes, and cigars are lit, and every one puffs away, until the word is passed round for "volunteers to relieve outposts."

On a Christmas night in barracks "lights out," usually sounded at a quarter-past ten, is almost invariably postponed for an hour or two; but on active service no such concession can obviously be granted with safety.

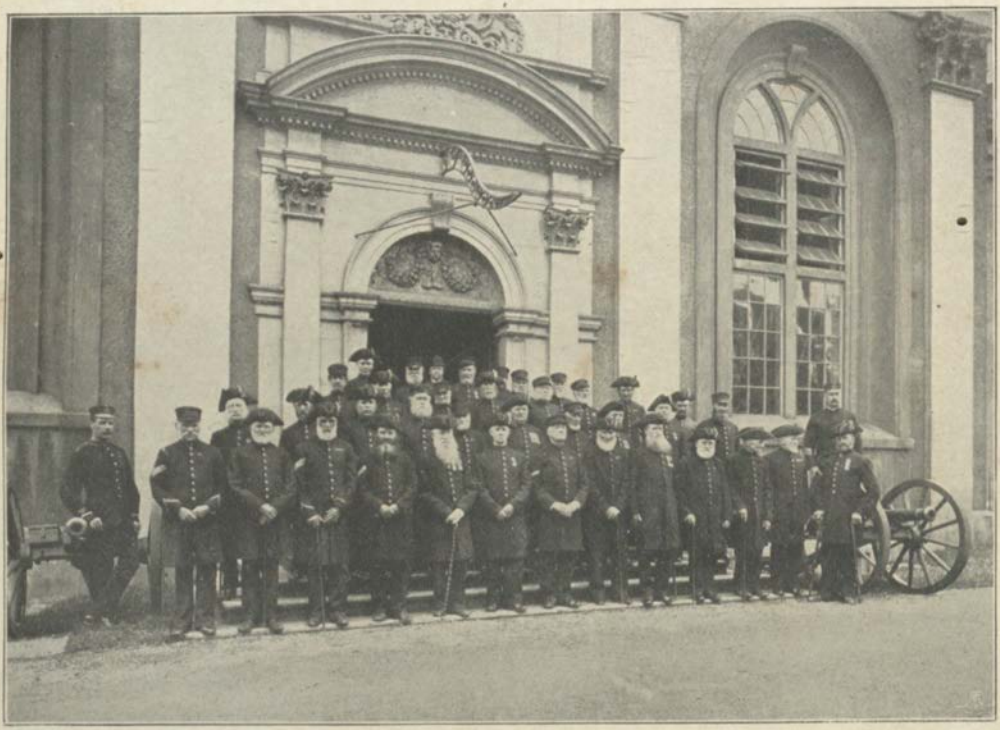
CHAPTER XXVII

TIME-EXPIRED MEN

WHEN a soldier completes seven years "with the colours" he becomes a "time-expired" man, and enters the reserve for five years. In the eyes of recruits he is an old soldier, but he is probably only a man of twenty-five or a little more years of age.

It cannot be said of him that the seven years seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to the army, but now that the time has expired, he is not as pleased as he often thought he would be. He will miss the old pals and the cuffers (yarns, anecdotes) they used to spin. To one of these gentlemen he remarks on the day he bids good-bye,[1] "Strike me fours-about! but when the captain shook

[1] See "Soldiers of the Queen," by Horace Wyndham, pp. 354 and 357.



Photo] [*G. W. Roche, Dublin.*

TIME-EXPIRED MEN.

my hand, and said as how I'd been a steady member of C Company, and that he was sorry to lose me, well, I tell you straight, Bill Smith, I felt a bit queer myself, a lump seemed to come into my throat."

"Tell that to the marines, old man!" is the incredulous reply, "and stand us another pot of throat-wash. Just you wait until my crimson seven's completed, and the blooming barracks ain't built that will see me inside them. Perish me pink! if they are."

Having supplied the "throat-wash" which was requisitioned, ex-private Jones replies pretty much like this: "Wait till you're a blooming civilian yourself, fathead! and then, when your waistbelt's a-tumbling off you for slackness, an' you hears the guard's buglers a-sounding, *Come to the cook-house door* at Wellington Barracks, I'll lay my last shirt but you'll precious soon be volunteering to do orderly-man again." And then in a sort of meditative soliloquy, "Yes, partner, we've had some good old beanos together, an' you and I have been in some pretty tight places at times. Well, it's all over now, and we'll never relieve each other on sentry again. Here am I in my

Hyde Park togs, leaving you behind in regimentals to follow me next year. What will you do when you get your discharge, Bill?"

"Oh, I'll be all Garnet, my son," answers Private Smith, light-heartedly. "I'll get a job of light work between meals, such as the sky-pilot got for Ginger Jackson of 'B,' who went away last month. There aren't many flies on Ginger Jackson; he's gardener to an old girl Sydenham way."

When the hour comes for the canteen to disgorge its patrons, Bill Smith and Company escort the time-expired man to his barrack-room, where there is a final handshaking all round, and after this, the reserve force is strengthened by another man.

The time of many becomes expired when they are serving abroad, and then, with perhaps the delay of a year, they get passages on transports and return to Old England. I used formerly to see a good deal of these men, for I lived near the "discharge depôt" at Gosport, to which all who come home from abroad time-expired go for a few days, to get their accounts squared, and to settle any little business they may

have to transact with H.M. the Queen, before they doff her uniform, and don the suits of civilian clothes which are given to them. When a troop-ship arrived, sometimes as many as a thousand time-expired men would march past my house on their way to Fort Brockhurst, the discharge depôt. "Motley" is the only word that describes the appearance they presented. There would be representatives of several regiments and branches of the service dressed in all kinds of full and fatigue, old and new uniforms. They had come from India, Hong Kong, the Straits Settlements, Egypt, Malta, and Gibraltar. It was evident that they had done the State some service, for their faces were bronzed, or rather were of a yellowish white colour, which matched their helmets. Some were healthy, others looked as if India had taken it out of them. Almost every second man carried a cage containing a bird, generally a green parrot. Poor fellows! they seemed delighted to put their feet once more on English ground, after enduring the heat and monotony of India, or the plagues of Egypt. I am sorry that a few of them manifested their joy by making darts into some

of the many public-houses that had sprung up to catch the savings of time-expired men.

The day after their arrival, I generally visited the Station Hospital, and found that a large number of time-expired invalids had been sent there, until they became sufficiently strong to go to their friends, who, doubtless, were preparing to welcome them home. I always enjoyed a chat with a time-expired man when not too ill to talk of his past experiences and future prospects. Some liked India, others detested it; some intended to have a "great meal" of liquor when they recovered, in order to spend their pay; others hoped to make a better use of the money; some would rejoin the army, others would seek for civilian employment; while the ne'er-do-weels would go on the tramp, and try to get a living by all means except work.

The reserve men have answered without a murmur the call to arms that was lately made, and employers have shown themselves not less patriotic in rendering the duty comparatively easy to them.

In time of peace, however, there are too many capitalists and employers of labour who will not give reserve men a chance.

Before the war there was a great number of reservists unemployed, and there will be a great number who cannot get work after it is ended.

I attended, three years ago, a meeting of an important branch of the National Association for the Employment of Reserve Soldiers. Three civilians were present, but with this exception all of us who composed the meeting were officers in the garrison. We felt that we were the wrong people. All that we could do was to wish that reserve men might be employed. Those who should have been present were the merchants and traders of the town who could employ them.

It is to be hoped that in other garrison towns civilians take more interest in the employment of reservists than they do in the one referred to, for the question chiefly concerns them. Certainly commanding officers may do much in preparing soldiers for employment when they go into the reserve. They can take care that the men serving under them do not deteriorate in any way, and try to get at least some of them to learn or practise a trade which would enable them when they leave the

regular army to compete in the skilled rather than in the unskilled labour market.

Reserve men are heavily handicapped owing to the fact that during the time they are soldiers they are removed from and become unused to ordinary work, and are in many cases debilitated by foreign climates. The problem for commanding officers is how to counteract these two influences. Perhaps they may not be able to solve the problem, but there is one little thing they could do which would greatly help those who try to get work for reserve soldiers. They could be more particular than they are to give perfectly truthful characters to men leaving their corps. A correspondent in the *Army and Navy Gazette* suggested that many soldiers are prevented from obtaining employment in civil life owing to their characters being set down as indifferent or bad by commanding officers. He considered that a man might bear an indifferent character from the military standpoint, owing to drunkenness and offences against discipline, and yet have all the qualities necessary for a citizen. With this contention we do not agree. One of the principal claims of a reserve man to civil

employment should be his regard for discipline and sobriety, and if he fail to display these qualities in the army, the chances are that he will turn out a bad or an indifferent citizen. It is mistaken kindness to give worthless men good characters, and it prevents good men from getting employment. If employers could trust these official documents, they would prefer them to the ordinary written characters shown by civilians when seeking situations.

This is about all that officers can do to help reserve soldiers to get work. The rest must be done by the general community whom it most concerns. That the nation has not risen to its responsibilities in this respect, is proved by the fact that thousands of reserve men are, during peace at least, out of work, and by the existence of associations for getting them employed, which are organised and managed by army officers, who really ought not to be troubled with the work at all.

Too often civilians forget that the army and navy are parts of the body politic, and that if one member of that body suffer all must suffer. They pay taxes and think that they ought not to be troubled any

more with the army at least, which most of them never see and seldom hear about except in the time of war. Try to get them to take an interest in the employment of soldiers, and they ask: "Why should we employ them when there are so many civilians out of work?" They forget that most unemployed civilians are either unable or unwilling to work, and that the only reserve soldiers we ask them to employ are those who are both able and willing. Probably if the territorial system became a reality instead of a mere name, the disastrous separation that now exists between the civilian and military parts of the population would cease. If a regiment always went to its own place as a matter of course on returning from foreign service, as do the Royal Marines, and never left it when in England, it would become known and appreciated, and the men on leaving would more easily find employment.

Only a short time before the South African campaign showed what a success the reserves are, with an air of omniscience a leading article in a military paper gave us what it called "The truth about the reserve." We were told that the

reserve was useless because never trained, and that it would be better to abolish it altogether, and make twelve years with the colours the period of service. To do this would be to attempt to go back to long service, which was given up, not so much by the authorities as by the youth of the country, who refused to enlist for any thing but a short time.

Rather, I would like to see the period of service at home made much shorter, indeed as short as possible, so that the greatest number of young men could be put through the army mill. I agree with those who think that there should be two armies—a long service one to be employed outside the British Islands, and a short service one for duty at home. Two or at most three years should be the length of service in the latter.

To the objection that there is little enough time under present arrangements to teach the soldier all that modern warfare requires him to learn, and that it would be impossible to do so if the time of his service were shortened, we reply, our soldiers have too many "fatigues" and "staff billets," as they call them, which

take them away from the drill of the barrack square. They are clerks, school-assistants, gardeners to a general, maids-of-all-work to Mrs Sergeant-Major, officers' servants, grooms, potmen in the canteen, waiters in the coffee-shop. In a battalion there are probably nearly two hundred employed in such unsoldierly offices. Indeed a soldier with a good character feels quite aggrieved if he has not some billet which excuses him from the proper work of his profession. Even at the commanding officer's parade you may see numbers of men looking out of the barrack-room windows, congratulating themselves that they are relieved from it, and laughing at those who were caught and made represent the battalion.

If reservists were employed to fill the "staff billets" referred to, all the time a regular soldier had for work could be used in acquiring a knowledge of his profession. The time of German and French soldiers is devoted to military duties exclusively, so they can learn their profession in two or three years. In the former army, I understand that those who are not smart soldiers have to hew wood and draw water for

those who are, that to the drones in the military hive are assigned the jobs which our soldiers think of as constituting honey-sweet billets, and for which they eagerly seek. These ought to be given only to duffer soldiers, or, better still, to time-expired men, who should be properly paid for doing them.

A solution of the problem how to employ men whose time has expired would be to form them into a corps like that of the commissionaires, and give to them the repairing of barracks and equipment, and generally all the work connected with the army that is now done by civilians. Then there are a great many clerkships in the War Office and elsewhere that might be filled by reservists. Certainly, as long as the War Office authorities do not employ these men as much as they might, it is useless for them to call upon the general public to do so.

But it is often said that reserve men are not willing to work. In the case of some this is undoubtedly true. Those who enlisted hoping to get away from work, and have an easy time, are not likely to greatly hanker after it on return-

ing to civilian life. They join the ranks of those who look for employment, and pray all the time that they may not get it.

As regards the majority of reserve men, however, we believe that they are willing to work, and if they seem not to be, many of them have told me the reason. It is because they are offered wages less than other men by the amount of their reserve pay. There are mean people in garrison towns on the look-out for cheap grooms and other labourers. These generous gentlemen say to reserve men who seek for work: "You get sixpence a day for belonging to the reserve, so you can afford to take that much less than other workmen." Very properly reservists refuse this most dishonest and unpatriotic offer. I call it dishonest, for surely it is not honest for employers to try and get cheap labour by defrauding a man of his reserve pay and the country that gives it. It is unpatriotic, too, for more than anything else it prevents young men enlisting. They see that time-expired men, after being on active service and in unhealthy foreign stations, get no reward in the shape of pension or reserve pay. The

country gives it, but employers of labour appropriate it to themselves by deducting it from the wages they pay. In excuse they say: "We pay taxes, and so this money which you tell us should be enjoyed by reserve men is really ours." But what about the other taxpayers, and surely the country does not wish her soldiers to be paid with one hand and robbed with another?

The chaplain of a convict prison asked one of his flock who was in durance vile for manslaughter what man he had killed. "It was a woman, my wife, and not a man," he replied; "but, sir," he continued, "it was altogether a private matter, with which the public has no concern." This was an exaggeration of the private business theory, but it certainly is not when a time-expired man tells an employer of labour who proposes to deduct the amount of his pension or reserve pay from wages, that whatever he has earned by serving in the army is altogether a private matter, with which the public ought not to interfere. When employers of labour go through the perils of active service, and endure the fevers and other diseases that afflict our soldiers on

foreign service, they will become entitled to sixpence a day from a grateful country, but they have no right to stay at home at ease, and plunder poor time-expired men, by taking advantage of their necessitous condition.

In one of his *Barrack-Room Ballads*, Mr Kipling thus sings of the soldier's outlook :—

> "Then don't ye weep for me,
> My lovely Mary Ann,
> For I'll marry ye yit,
> On a fourpenny-bit,
> As a time-expired man."

The fourpenny-bit is only too symbolic of Tommy Atkins' prospects in the cultivation of the arts of peace.

It must be confessed, however, that a good many time-expired men bring misery upon themselves. They squander their savings, and too often marry "lovely Mary Anns" before they have secured permanent employment.

All honour to those who try to get work for time-expired soldiers. It may strengthen the hands of these good men, and give a melancholy amusement to some of my readers, if I quote the following, which a patient in the Royal Victoria Military

Hospital, Netley, wrote to raise his spirits, as he meditated the evening before leaving the hospital and the army on the prospects before him in civilian life.

First Annual Consolation Meeting of the
Unemployed will be held in
Incurable Rooms, Forlorn Place, Melancholy Street,
on the 34th February, 1900,
Scavenger Mick in the chair.
Those who are sick of life admitted free.
The platform will be reserved for intending Suicides.
Tears on the Table during the evening.
Ropes, Poison, and Razors, gratis. Coffins will
arrive at 11 p.m.

"Is the army going to the dogs?" is often asked. Its recent deeds show that the present army is not, but it is to be feared that not a few of those whose time in it has expired have gone to that destination. The writer knows a retired general officer, who devotes his life to nothing better than the care of his wife's lap-dog. Just now his days are full of care, and his nights rendered sleepless, thinking what present the "little darling" would like for her birthday. Another soldier known to him, this time a private, has become a professional dog-stealer. So it is that time-expired officers and men go to the dogs if not employed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MR THOMAS ATKINS THEN AND NOW

IF we would understand Thomas Atkins as he is now, we must study his predecessors —we must recall the circumstances of their lives, for out of these the present conditions of soldiering have developed.

The army, in the reign of Charles II., from which our present force of 238,172 and potential 337,300 is traced, numbered 5000 men. James II. increased this number to 30,000, which gave great dissatisfaction, and was thought dangerous to the liberties of the people. It was only in 1792 that barracks were provided. At first each regiment was recruited and kept up by a sort of contract between the crown and its colonel, with the result that the former was cheated, and that criminals and vagabonds were passed into the service. "Thieves, too lame to run, and too poor to bribe, were caught."

Short service is not a recent invention. Under Queen Anne a three years' term was general, and in 1745 men were enlisted for only two years. But though short engagements were resorted to spasmodically, the usual term of enlistment was for life. Discharges were permitted as a reward for good conduct, and were ordered by court-martial in extreme cases of misconduct; but there was no middle course. Desertion was the principal crime, and neither shooting nor flogging (up to 2000 lashes) seems to have had any effect.

A man on one occasion was given 500 lashes because the hair pig-tail which soldiers once wore fell off his head on parade. I have seen in the handwriting of Wellington an order for a soldier to receive on one day (10th of June, 1816) 999 lashes for "uttering" a bad two-franc piece to a woman at Versailles. So lately as 1825 a man was sentenced to 1900 lashes, and received 1200. It is a fact that the celebrated William Cobbett was imprisoned for writing an article against the authorities when, in Hounslow barracks, a soldier was flogged to death. No wonder that a distaste and contempt for the military profession

were created, which even now have not entirely disappeared.

Sixty years ago at some stations abroad soldiers were virtually confined to barracks for long periods. General Sir Charles Napier wrote in a book published in 1837:

"Within three months two men shot off their feet, in a regiment quartered in the same barracks in which I was living, in order to obtain their discharges."

Besides the monotony of the soldiers' duties, the discomforts of barracks were great. The cubic space allowed by regulation was 300 ft. per man; now it is 600. The barrack-rooms were low, badly warmed, and without light after sunset, and all washing was done in them, for there were no ablution-rooms or laundries. The beforementioned William Cobbett, who began life as a private soldier, taught himself to read by the light of the guard-room fire. He tells us that so hungry used he to be that once, when with great care he had put by a halfpenny or penny to treat himself to a red herring, and some one stole the coin, he actually cried with vexation—and starvation. In his time soldiers were only given one

meal a day, and had little money (about fourpence a day) to buy extras.

As for the officers, they were ignorant of even the words of command, and were often prompted by a sergeant, or an old soldier placed behind them. In 1837, the general officer commanding the North-Western District wrote :

"The officers are very fine fellows, full of life and spirit, but the Devil could not make them read a book."

Nor was this abstention from military literature on the part of officers the result of exclusive attention to physical education. In one garrison in Canada in the early 'forties, there were two colonels, supposed to command battalions, who could not mount their horses unless provided with a chair or mounting-block.

Indeed there were not enough military exercises to keep down fat, at least in the officers. General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., etc., thus describes what then took place, or rather what did not take place :

"For about six months of the year there was no parade at all at the depôts, and in those held by the battalions on home service the evolutions had no resemblance to anything which could occur in war. The usual move-

ments were 'marching past in slow and quick time,' 'counter marching,' which may be likened to a complicated form of 'ladies' chain' in a quadrille, and 'changing front to the rear on the two centre companies.'. The cavalry and artillery practised the same sort of evolutions. These movements were practised by the infantry as late as 1866, and both in their method and in their value for war, even as understood in those days, may be described by the old nursery rhyme,

'Turn about and wheel about, and do just so—
And every time you turn about, you jump Jim Crow.'"

In 1792 the army mounted up to 57,000 men; but these were not considered sufficient, so Militia was enrolled by ballot. Substitutes were allowed, who were not badly paid, as may be seen from the following entry in the *Annual Register* for 1810. "£60 was last week (in February) paid at Plymouth for a substitute for the militia." One man went on condition of receiving 4s. per day during the war, and another sold himself for 7s. 3d. per lb.!

The variation in the standard of height is instructive. In 1802 it was five feet seven inches, while in 1813 it had gone down to five feet three inches. And here we would call the attention of those who complain of the youth and immaturity of our soldiers now, to the fact that at Waterloo many

regiments consisted of mere boys. Old officers used to relate that in appearance and physique they compared unfavourably with their Continental allies. We would all like to see older men enter the army, but it is not possible to get them, and the present plan of taking them at eighteen is not without compensations. Young men are more easily trained. Then there is great capacity for growth and development from the eighteenth to the twentieth year, and, with the good food and careful physical training which the recruit receives, by enlisting growing lads under twenty, bigger men are ultimately secured than if the same class were taken from civil life at twenty. Nor would a recruit two years older be obtained as cheaply.

From 1819 to 1854 there was uninterrupted peace, and the country refused to trouble itself about military matters. The consequence was that the outbreak of the Crimean war found us shamefully unprepared in all respects, but particularly in not having any reserve. The peace establishment had fallen so low, that after the first effort had been made to despatch a force of 25,000 men, no reserve of

seasoned soldiers remained at home, and no means existed of supplying the waste of an army in the field except by sending out recruits.

There was no staff, known as such, no Army Service, Medical, or Transport corps, and, "no general qualified to handle more than one arm, *i.e.*, the cavalry or infantry, while the artillery was kept as distant from the rest of the army as if it had been a separate profession."

The one pleasant memory England has of this war—begun, continued, and ended foolishly—is the devotion to duty of her soldiers. These heroic men, who were destroyed by unnecessary and preventable privations, exposure, disease, and undue exertion, never gave in, and lay down to die without a murmur.

A good result that sprang from the sufferings of our soldiers in the Crimea, was the increased attention given to the care of sick and wounded men. It was furthered in a marked degree by the exertions of women. Miss Nightingale, and the ladies who accompanied her to the East, did great service in ameliorating the condition of the soldiers when in hospital.

This service was enhanced by the personal interest taken in the question by the Sovereign. In March 1855, the Queen, after a visit to the sick and wounded at Chatham, while praising the attention paid to the men in hospital, added: "The windows are so high no one can look out of them, and the wards are like prisons." The immediate result of the interest evoked was the erection of the great military hospital at Netley, and, somewhat later, the Herbert Hospital at Woolwich.

It is interesting, when observing the names of private soldiers killed or wounded in action, now telegraphed from our most distant possessions with the same care as are the names of officers, to look back to the debates in the Houses of Parliament on the subject of the services of soldiers, and the scanty recognition of the acts of courage which helped to gain for Europe peace lasting forty years. There had been several attempts to obtain a medal or decoration for the privates who, in the Peninsula, had carried our flag from Lisbon across Spain to Madrid, and thence to Paris. All these attempts were, however, defeated until 1847, when the Government

gave way. The Duke of Wellington, on this as on previous occasions, opposed the consideration of the petition.

Probably England never waged a war which excited so keen an interest as the great Boer war. One reason for this may be the speed at which the result and even the detailed accounts of the battles were made known. How different it was after Waterloo! It is on record that that victory was only heard of in some remote English village a year and a half after it was gained!

When the Queen visited the troops collected in Aldershot Camp in the summer of 1856, she said that she had that day seen regiments which, after eighteen years foreign service in a trying climate, had spent but seven months in England when they had been despatched to the Crimea, and then, after but one year at home, had been put under orders for India, where at that time the tour of service was for twenty years.

To create a reserve, Mr Cardwell in 1870 introduced the present short service system. Soon followed the linked battalion plan and the distribution of regulars,

militia, and volunteers, into territorial districts.

Short service had become a necessity, if we were to have a reserve, which is the stand-by of every modern army, and the territorial connection was not given to the battalions merely to vex old officers, as they seemed to think, but for recruiting purposes.

With the two line battalions were associated the two militia battalions and the volunteers of the locality, in order that these auxiliary forces might obtain better training, and their staff be more useful. Before this, the staff of the militia did not aid recruiting, and except during the training, had nothing to do beyond the custody of their equipments, and passed the remainder of the year in idleness. There are many things that can be said against short service, but there were many more objections to the system that preceded it. Then we had an army without power of expansion, long service with estrangement from civil life, enforced abstention from marriage, or the alternative of a large following of wives with each regiment, but not on the establishment, ruined health

from protracted exposure to bad climates, and too long familiarity with the grog-shops of garrison towns, and a pension list becoming heavier and heavier.

Another measure which in itself and by its consequences was of great importance in clearing the ground for the future working of the army, was the abolition of purchase. Before 1871, when this measure was introduced, the army was really in pledge to the officers who had bought commissions. Promotion by selection of the fittest was impossible, and also the testing of ability by examinations. A colonel used to keep what he called "my regiment" for life. Even staff officers became chronic. One officer was forty years quarter-master-general, and one of his assistants remained in that position twenty-nine years, each serving on until removed by death.

Of course we cannot compete in numbers with foreign armies; but in many other respects ours is superior. Take one point. The lowest standard of height in our service is five feet four inches; in the German army it is five feet and half an inch.

The great Continental powers can bring enormous multitudes into the field, but if the war lasted any time how would they be fed? Not one of them could send 20,000 men 1,000 miles from its base oversea or overland at once. Then surely the voluntary character of our army counts for much. Enforced soldiers will fight for their fatherland, but would they go everywhere, and do everything—Nile Expeditions, Boer wars, and games of that kind?

History tells us with what majesty British soldiers fought even when they were "an army of lions led by asses," so we may expect greater things now that the leaders are learning the rudiments of the science of war. We are confident, in spite of what croakers say, that, as far as it goes, there is not a better army in the world than the British—that "good old mixture" of English, Scotch, and Irish soldiers. Certainly, Napoleon thought the British infantry so good, that he thanked heaven there were not many of them.

What our army is now has been shown by the not little but very big war in South Africa. Its short-service men have been

as brave as soldiers ever were, and if their courage at times seemed to some to be without knowledge, and their mode of fighting to be that of fanatical Dervishes rather than the kind that scientific leading would have directed, arm-chair critics should remember that the generals had difficulties to contend against which we at home cannot realise.

No one could read the account of Elandslaagte battle, and those that followed it, without feeling that a British army still bears with it an "awful power." What Napier said of the men who stormed Badajoz in 1812, is as true of those who captured Talana Hill: "No nation ever sent forth braver troops to battle." Corporal Joseph Todd, of the Cape Imperial Light Horse, in a letter to his father at West Hartlepool, said:—

"It was a grand sight to see the Britishers go into battle. They went up Talana Hill in the face of a perfect hail of bullets and shells just as if they were going to a picnic, so calm and collected were they. I am not speaking of myself, for we—that is my squadron—were with the artillery, and we saw it all."

"And now, 'tis known that Englishmen at need
Have won a fiery and unequal fray,
No infantry has ever done such deed
Since Albuera's day!"

"There is no beating these troops in spite of their Generals. I always thought they were bad soldiers; now I am sure of it. I had turned their right, pierced their centre, and everywhere the victory was mine, but they did not know how to run."

So wrote Marshal Soult after the battle of Albuera regarding the British troops. They were bad soldiers who did not understand when they were beaten, and did not know how to run away. In this sense our soldiers have always been and are now the worst in the world.

The noble way her sons all over the world have come to the rescue has proved to England that even as a military nation she is greater than she knew.

The actual war strength of the empire is approximately as follows:—

Army at home and abroad	238,172
Reserves	78,798
Militia Reserves	29,000
Militia	99,000
Yeomanry	8,800
Volunteers	230,000
Imperial Native Army of India (excluding Native States)	150,000
European Volunteers in India and elsewhere	30,000
Imperial Service Troops	20,000
Canadian Militia	35,000
Carry forward	618,770

Brought forward .	618,770
Canadian Militia Reserves	200,000
Cape Colony Volunteers, Mounted Rifles, etc.	7,400
New South Wales Forces	10,000
Victorian Forces	7,000
South Australian Forces	3,000
Forces of other Australian Colonies . .	3,000
New Zealand Forces	7,000
Other Colonies, etc.	12,000
	1,168,170

Pitt once answered a volunteer colonel who pestered him with enquiries whether the corps would be expected to serve abroad, by saying "Not except in case of invasion." This was his little joke. We have not been invaded, and we did not expect our citizen soldiers to go abroad, but they have volunteered to do so. The spirit shown under the stress of the Boer war is truly fine.

Our "Home Army" is supposed to supply three "Army Corps" for home defence and two for active service abroad, besides forces for minor expeditions. An "Army Corps" has a rather elastic interpretation as regards numbers. Its strength and the proportion of cavalry, artillery, etc., must depend on the nature of the cam-

paign. On paper the British Army Corps is about 36,000.

To complete an Army Corps all "units" have to be made up to their "war strength," and for this purpose a portion of the army reserve has to be mobilised. The army reserve is not a separate force in itself, but has been described in the House of Commons as "men who have been allowed to go on furlough on certain conditions." It is, in fact, composed of men who have served in the ranks, and have returned to civil life, receiving nominal pay for holding themselves in readiness to return to the colours when called upon. They are classified in four sections according to their length of service in the ranks and their conditions of reserve service. Their pay varies (according to the section) from 4d. to 1s. per diem when not serving with the colours. It is from this source mainly that the "peace strength" of a unit (battalion of infantry, squadron of cavalry, battery of artillery, company of engineers, etc.) is made up to "war strength" for the purposes of mobilisation. The total available strength of the army reserve is 82,000.

Imagine the head and hand work that

is required to feed an army like that which we put into South Africa against the Boers. For only 50,000 men for a three months' campaign, the weight of food and forage would be 50,000 tons. If it were necessary to transport at one time all this in waggons, each carrying two tons' weight, and drawn by eight mules, no fewer than 25,000 waggons and 200,000 mules would be called into requisition; and the procession of waggons would reach in a straight line from Charing Cross through the length of England, to the banks of the Tweed.

And not only have men and horses to be fed, but rifles, cannon, and shells. The ammunition, which I call their food, has to be brought for them.

When we consider the immense quantity of food to be supplied from day to day, and the enormous difficulty of transport to a distance many hundreds of miles from the base of supply, in a rugged country infested by a numerous enemy, we realise something of the demands on organising power.

And then to think that men, horses, war material, and much of the food had

to be brought from England a distance of six thousand miles. The guns and carriages of the siege artillery alone that were sent out are said to weigh 3000 tons.

CHAPTER XXIX

MRS THOMAS ATKINS

OUGHT soldiers to marry? Most officers give a negative answer to this question. When they hear of one of their comrades taking the adjutancy of a Volunteer regiment they shake their heads sorrowfully over him, for they know that from that to the altar of Hymen is only a step. How are the mighty fallen! His place at the mess table will know him no more. When ordered abroad, or indeed to make any move, his wife and children will pull at his sword belt. He will no longer be a keen soldier. He will be troubled about much serving in his house, rather than about action in the tented field. The proper coming out of baby's measles will occupy his thoughts more than the fit of the red coats of his company or battalion. He will invent all kinds of matrimonial "shunts" to escape duty and to get more allowances, He will steal two

or three of the Queen's soldiers to keep them at domestic work in his house. His wife will separate him from his old chums, and make mischief in the regiment. Of course, if he be a disagreeable commanding officer, or a major "with a liver," the subs. think that he ought to be married, because they want to get rid of him from mess; but the thought of a good fellow marrying and burying himself in shabby domesticity, is to them a sad one.

Indeed it would be well if even officers had to get leave to marry, and were prevented from doing so (as is the case in some Continental armies) on insufficient incomes. I have known a married subaltern who was moved from one place to another seventeen times in a year, and an assistant adjutant-general once told me that married officers have come to him, and even cried, because they had been ordered to a new station, and had not enough money to move their families.

However, it is possible to be a soldier though married. Wolseley, Roberts, Wood, White, and many others still with us, not to mention past heroes, have accomplished the feat. Roman soldiers were, I believe, encouraged to marry, because it was thought

that the shame of going home to their wives and children if they were guilty of cowardice would make them behave as they ought. Then most people admit that marriage has a steadying effect upon a man. It gives him a greater stake in life, and something for which to work. Nor is it so very expensive. Indeed I have sometimes said to officers who had large monthly mess bills: "I wonder how you can afford not to marry: I could not."

Of course all depends upon the wife that is chosen. Before allowing himself to fall too deeply in love, a young officer should ask himself: "If I marry this girl, will she make a good colonel's or general's wife, in case I attain to that position? Will she raise or lower the tone of my regiment?" This leads me to say a word about the wives of commanding officers. There is no position in society in which a woman can do more good or more harm than in this. She may be a mother in Israel or a Jezebel who deserves to be thrown down and dashed to pieces on the pavement of the barrack square. If she be the right sort, she will be a true friend to every one in the regiment, and she will make her house a centre of light

and leading. The young officers will respect her, and treat her like a sister or mother. She will be a pattern of quiet dress and comportment to every woman on the married roll. Above all, she will never interfere with her husband's duties, as did one colonel's wife known to the writer, concerning whom even the drummer-boys used to say: "Mrs So-and-So—she's the colonel." With plenty of tact and the feelings of a true lady, she will make no mischief, and will always be found on the side of peace. She may, and she ought to, love her regiment, but she will not be that horror, a regimental woman, who wears a sort of uniform made up of her husband's old badges, buttons, and gold lace, talks "shop," and calls the subalterns by their Christian names. A commanding officer's wife who has narrow-minded, religious, and philanthropical "fads," generally makes herself very troublesome. One of these ladies whom I remember was well-meaning, but she set her regiment by the ears, for though she did everything that was right, she invariably did it in a wrong way.

There is no one who more requires to attend to the precept, "Mind whom you marry," than

the young soldier. Many gentlemen privates I have known who lost all chance of getting commissions by marrying in the days of their inexperience and inferiority of position social impossibilities.

The wife of a captain or of a subaltern has a trying position when, as often happens, the wife of her husband's commanding officer is jealous of her beauty, her youth, her popularity, or her money. All she can do is to live down this jealousy, and refrain from flaring her advantages before the eyes of Mrs Colonel. Indeed, the wife of a young officer is surrounded by many temptations—so many that not a few military men say they would never marry in the army. Still, nothing can harm a good woman. Such an one will refrain from flirting, and will live well within her husband's income. I have known many promising officers who had to leave the service on account of the extravagance of their wives.

Nothing tests matrimony in the services more than the long separations that are frequently necessary between officers and their wives. These ladies cannot go on active service. They have to return from India and live alone in England for the

education of their children. Of course naval married people have continually to live apart. These separations are expensive and morally dangerous. Before marrying, officers should be careful to choose for wives girls whom they can trust when five thousand miles away. And, certainly, travelling backwards and forwards in a troop-ship by herself, does not tend to elevate a woman's character.

In many respects, however, foreign service is better for married military people than serving at home. A bachelor in India has to pay nearly as much for a bungalow for himself as he would if he were married, and he must keep nearly as many servants. There are more allowances, too, abroad, and living is generally cheaper. Add to this that life is less stiff and people are more sociable.

I would warn young ladies who are attacked by "scarlet fever," that the life of an officer's wife is not all glitter and gaiety. There is much anxiety and difficulty in it, anxiety about a husband and children when unavoidably separated from them, and difficulty in trying to keep up a good appearance on a small income.

To turn now to matrimony amongst non-commissioned officers and the rank and file.

The present generation can hardly believe that, until the year 1849, the wives of soldiers "on the strength" lived almost without exception in the barrack-rooms among the men. There were generally a married couple in each room, and to these custom assigned the corner farthest from the door. No matter what the number of the family might be, they were allowed but two single beds and two men's space. The only pretence at privacy provided was the six-feet-high canvas screening which the husband would put round his matrimonial bower. Children, it is true, were rarely born in the corner; for at that time the soldier, out of his few pence a day pay, did get some lodging for his wife, but daughters grew from childhood to girlhood with but a screen between them and the men outside. When a daughter was out of place, all the home she had to come to was the corner, and it was not uncommon for a grown young woman to sleep therein, on the top of a chest alongside the bed of her parents.

At the fire-place of the room the "woman of the room" cooked for her room-mates, in return for which a "mess" was given to her from the men's rations. She would take her share of a gallon of porter at the common table, but she did not get drunk, for she feared the criticism of her men. And the "woman of the room" had in her turn a good effect upon the men. She was a check upon foul language, she was motherly to the forlorn "'cruitie," she would sew on a button if asked civilly. She was the repository of not a few little confidences, and, if she could write, pen-woman in general to the room. Sometimes, as a special favour, she would allow a man to bring his sweetheart on a Sunday afternoon for a cup of tea behind the screen in the corner. But it was when the corps was moving, and especially when going abroad, that the miseries of the wives of soldiers in those days came to a climax. Before railways, they generally tramped after the men, and stowed away their brats in odd corners in the baggage waggons. At night, when not allowed to share the billets of their husbands, they would be smuggled into haylofts above the troop

horses, or would find lodgings for themselves on the lee side of a hedge.

For a long time after the *ménage* in the corner ceased, things were very little better for married people in the army. Into one room seven or eight families were huddled. There was but one fire-place, and the women fought for their turns at it. At length the Queen got to hear of this pigging, and married quarters were built, but even to the family of a non-commissioned officer of the highest grade, only one room was given. How different it is now! In barracks lately built, a married warrant-officer has two good sitting-rooms, two good bedrooms, kitchen and scullery, wash-house, yard, and garden. The family of a staff-sergeant has the same, the only difference being that they have one sitting-room instead of two.

All this astonishes foreign officers who visit us. When on one occasion the present writer was talking about this matter to a German officer, and told him of the married quarters, schools, schoolmasters, and other arrangements for the convenience of married people that are in our barracks, the German asked, "What are women and

children for—they don't fight?" No, but they may inspire men to do so.

> "Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
> That beat to battle where he stands;
> Thy face across his fancy comes
> And gives the battle to his hands."

We have quoted a German criticism about marriage in our army; here is one from the United States. I saw it in an American paper, where it was remarked that our soldiers were treated as children, because they had to get leave to marry. Suppose, however, that Tommy Atkins were permitted to marry when he thought proper, and bring his wife upon the strength of his corps, would there not soon be nearly as many women in the army as men? and how would the poor taxpayers like to provide these ladies with quarters, fuel and light, rations of beef and bread when abroad, and transport them from place to place? If a soldier were allowed to marry without any regard being had to his character or to that of the girl he proposed to bring into his regiment; if no question were asked about his length of service and his ability to support a wife, the suffering and immorality which are now caused by

reckless and improvident marriages, would be indefinitely increased.[1] And to what extent that suffering and immorality exist even now is only known to a chaplain or some one else who has had for years an opportunity of studying the painful subject. A girl does not know what she is doing when she marries a soldier who cannot obtain permission to marry or get his wife upon the strength. Too often she has to give up the hard battle in despair, and enter upon a yet more wretched campaign.

A private soldier who is not a bandsman, officer's servant, or possessed of some other billet, can at most only give his wife five shillings a week. He will probably tell the girl before marriage that he expects to get this or that employment, and that he will soon be promoted; but if she is wise she will see the sergeant's, or at least corporal's, stripes on his arm, and make sure that these have not been falsely assumed, before she allow him to put a ring on her finger.

[1] It is to be hoped that marrying off the strength will not be encouraged by the generosity of the public to the families of soldiers who went to the South African campaign, and that designing fair ones will not by the memory of it be induced to set their caps at soldiers on the approach of the next war Wanted a soldier going to be killed!

A well-known officer, writing on the subject of "Marriage without Leave" in the army, says:

"I solemnly declare that during the last eight years of my service, I have seen scenes of suffering and sorrow, the bare remembrance of which makes my heart ache; and, I might add, have known wickedness grave enough to make an angel weep."

We fear that our present short-service soldiers are even more imprudent in this respect than the old style of long-service, if not long-headed, men used to be. Our recruits, who are only boys, when they are more than children in arms, propose marriage to Sarah Jane almost immediately after donning the red coat.

The following proportion of soldiers are permitted to marry, and their families are allowed barrack accommodation or lodging allowance:—

All warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of the higher grades. Sergeants, about 50 per cent.; rank and file, from 3 to 7 per cent., according to the arm of the service. This may seem a small number for the privates, but as the majority enlist at the age of eighteen, and complete their seven years' service with the

colours at twenty-five, there is no excuse for their marrying, unless they have become non-commissioned officers, and intend to remain in the army.

If a soldier have seven years' service, a good conduct badge, £5 saved, and is in other respects entitled to marry, and there is a vacancy for his wife on the strength of the corps, she will have quarters, fuel, and, in India, rations and payment for herself and children. She may even earn six times as much as her husband by washing for the men of his company. When, however, nothing comes in except five shillings a week, the result is misery and too often immorality on the part of the wife. The husband wearies of the contest, and, perhaps not having money to pay his wife's fare when the regiment moves, takes the opportunity of deserting from his matrimonial obligations. A few years ago a regiment moved from Plymouth, where I was stationed, to Belfast, leaving over a hundred wives married off the strength. I got up a subscription and sent some of them to join their husbands. One or two found that in six weeks' time their places had been filled up, and it was intimated to me that I had better

forward no more wives. It is a sad fact that many of the wives left behind in Plymouth married men of the regiment that relieved the one in which were their husbands. I am far from saying that soldiers are more addicted to wife-desertion, bigamy, and similar crimes than other men, but that they have greater temptations. They are more run after by women, and they move about as civilians do not.

I hope it is different now, but twenty years ago, at Bermuda, soldiers would sometimes marry coloured women. They did so in most instances because they knew that when the regiment left the station they could leave them behind. One day the governor was lamenting to me about these marriages, and I suggested that they would cease if soldiers had to bring their dusky partners back with them to England.

Certainly some soldiers have great facilities for marrying. When it was proposed, a good many years ago, to establish the third or tea-meal which now exists in the army, even the soldiers themselves opposed the innovation simply because it was new. A Life Guardsman, being examined on the subject by a Court of Inquiry, was asked

if he would like a tea-meal. "Tea-meal, sir, yes; I should have no particular objection to a tea-meal." But when it was further explained to him that this provision would involve a fractional deduction from his pay, he bristled with indignation. "Pay for it! No, sir. A Life Guardsman must be a precious ugly fellow if the servant-girls will not give him his tea for nothing."

Unless a Life Guardsman is a very ugly fellow indeed, it is said that servant girls will pay him so much an hour for walking with them, and making them the fashion. And of course these ladies will be delighted if the handsome fellows consent to guard them for life as their husbands. Tommy Atkins of the Life Guards, or Blues, quite appreciates his opportunities, and by no means always throws them away. He has an eye for business as well as for beauty, and does not hesitate to pass over impecunious Janes, Marys, and Susans in favour of a substantial cook or lady's-maid who has a nice little sum in the Post-Office Savings Bank. In course of time the soldier's discharge is purchased, and the happy couple start in some business which is generally

either in the public-house or lodging-house line.

Piper Findlater of the Gordon Highlanders, who though severely wounded in the battle of Dargai, and unable to advance in the charge made by his regiment, continued to play his pipes until the heights of Dargai were taken, received on his return home several offers of marriage, one from a lady not unknown in Indian society, and possessed of a large income.

A young artisan proposed to the daughter of a well-to-do Birmingham tradesman, and was contumeliously shown to the door by her parents. In a fit of despair he joined the army and served through the Afghan campaign, where he was so badly wounded as to necessitate a re-entry into civil life. Unable, on account of his injury, to follow his old occupation, he obtained the post of attendant on an invalid gentleman, who, on his decease, left him sufficient money to buy a share in the business of the very man who some time before had refused him the hand of his daughter, but who now was only too glad to reconsider his determination.

A certain non-commissioned officer, whose slim proportions had evoked the contempt

of her whom he would have fain called wife, received such a severe wound during a Soudan campaign, that active service saw him no more. But it is an ill wind that blows no one any good, for the sedentary life that he was now obliged to lead was so conducive to the formation of adipose tissue, that he rapidly found favour in his lady's sight, and within the year became a happy bridegroom.

Not long ago a young fellow of good family thought to assuage the pangs of disappointed love by the active duties of a soldier's life. He enlisted; his regiment was ordered to South Africa, and was among those that opposed the Boers at Glencoe. Not many hours later the young lady who had been the cause of his leaving home read his name among the list of wounded, and was so horrified at the result of her rejection of her lover that, smitten with remorse, she at once telegraphed her regret, and accepted him for her husband. Let us hope that such a pretty romance will reach a happy consummation.

Soldiers find little difficulty in making the acquaintance of the girls that eventually occupy married quarters. One of the

servants who left my house to marry church orderlies, said that the first time she saw her soldier husband on the Hoe at Plymouth, she liked his look, and dropped her handkerchief for him to pick up. The handkerchief became a bond of union.

Soldiers take their walks (which they like better than route-marching) where nursemaids most congregate, and an offer to wheel a perambulator goes far, though that vehicle generally remains stationary. "Maria, is that your youngest?" or, "Will you make a soldier of him?" is considered a good working introduction. Then when a regiment marches under the windows of lodging-houses the general servants of these establishments hang out of the windows by their apron-strings, and, of course, the soldiers salute their "generals."

Soldiers might choose much better wives than they do, but they do not all marry unwisely. No one knows and respects a good woman more than does Mr Thomas Atkins. One day a girl said to a friend: "Eliza, three of my young men are coming this evening; come along with me." Eliza came, and kept quietly on one side while her friend talked at a great rate to the three young

soldiers. When they were about to separate the nicest of the men turned to her and said: "Will you not show me where your mother lives?" All soldiers, however, are not as wise as this, and too many of them marry girls quite unsuited to military life, and before they have the means of supporting them. I knew one who won twenty pounds at races, and proceeded to marry upon it.

Still, soldiers who are rising non-commissioned officers may not be undesirable husbands. Their pay is as good as that of most working-men, and their characters, owing to discipline, are more reliable. There is an anecdote told of the Dutch King of England which shows how devoted a soldier could be to wife and children. William had sentenced an insubordinate regiment to be decimated. The soldiers drew lots, but one of them, who had drawn—death, was able to find a substitute. A poor fellow agreed to be shot in his stead for a hundred pistoles, to be paid to his relations after his execution. Having heard of the bargain William sent for the soldier, and asked whether what he had been told was true. "Yes," replied the man, "I have run the

risk of being killed all my life for next to nothing a day, and now I can secure my wife and children something substantial; I am ready to die." William pardoned the man and gave him the hundred pistoles.

Tests like this are not applied to soldiers in our day, but we think that if they were, the domestic affections of the modern Tommy Atkins would not be found wanting. I am sure that the last moments of married soldiers who fell in South Africa were cheered by the thought that the British public would not allow their wives and children to starve, or even to go to the workhouse.

No doubt the woman who "enlists" in the army has a good deal to put up with. She has no settled home, and is under command and discipline like the men, but she soon comes to look upon her regiment as a home, and to take pride in it. *Esprit de corps*, which in reason is a very good thing, is strong amongst the wives of soldiers. The airs put on by the wives of cavalry, horse artillery, or any who consider that they belong to a corps a cut above others, are very amusing *They* are "ladies" of the first order, and pride themselves on not knowing "the women trash of infantry swine."

Living in a small inland village near the fishing town of Wick, is an elderly Scotchwoman who is said to have "thrashed an army." She is the wife of a sergeant of the 93rd Highlanders, and accompanied her husband through the Crimean War. Kingslake, the historian of the Crimea, describes how this heroic woman literally thrashed an army of cowardly soldiers.

On the morning of the battle of Balaclava, the 93rd were drawn up to repel the attack of an overwhelming body of Cossack cavalry. "The Highlanders," says Kingslake, "were supported on the left by a regiment of Turkish artillery, who, on observing the enormous force approaching them, became panic-stricken, and deserted their batteries in confusion. In their flight, they had to pass between the Highlanders and their camp, where they met a new and terrible foe. A woman came out of one of the Scottish tents, armed with a stick, and soundly thrashed the cowardly Turks as they passed within her reach. Seizing hold of a burly Turk by the head, she beat him until he roared for mercy. Although the Highlanders were now standing ready to receive the charge of the Russians, vastly

their superiors in strength and numbers, and with death staring them in the face, yet they were so amused that they broke out into uncontrollable laughter." Well done, Mrs Atkins!

When the Guards were leaving London for the last Boer war, a girl who had lately married one of them was heard to say to her husband: "Keep your pecker up, Dick!" "'Tain't me," replied the Guardsman, "as needs keep my pecker up, but Kruger." Women have not a little to do in keeping up or keeping down the "pecker" of men.

THE END.

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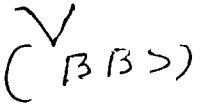

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